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FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY.

STORIES OF
BOYS WHO MAKE MONEY.

BOUND TO MAKE HIS MARK
OR RUNNING A MOVING PICTURE SHOW

AND OTHER STORIES

By A Self-Made Man



"I wonder what's keeping Duncan so long?" said Carter to Miss Leslie. The words were hardly out of his mouth when the double entrance doors were suddenly banged open and Duncan dashed out, hatless and in a state of great excitement.

Fame and Fortune Weekly

STORIES OF BOYS WHO MAKE MONEY

JNA

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BOUND TO MAKE HIS MARK

—OR—

RUNNING A MOVING PICTURE SHOW

By A SELF-MADE MAN

CHAPTER I.

A CURIOUS STATE OF AFFAIRS.

"The Savoy has gone out of business again," said Duncan Scott to Sam Hickey, manager of the United Film Corporation.

"The dickens it has," ejaculated Hickey, evidently surprised by the information.

"I found it closed at two o'clock with a sign displayed reading, 'For Sale. Apply to William Jackson, No — Prospect Avenue.' There wasn't a soul on the premises, so I went around to Jackson's flat, on Prospect avenue, to learn what the trouble was, but I couldn't get in. I rang the bell three times without result."

"That place must be hoodooed, for Jackson is the fifth man who has tried to make it go in the last six months."

"That's all rot. There's no such thing as a hoodoo."

"Then how do you account for five people, one right after the other, failing to keep it open with our films, which are the best in the market? We put out the product of a dozen of the best companies, and there's hardly one that isn't a hummer, whether it's a one, two or three reel subject."

"I can't account for it, for the neighborhood is well populated and the people are not slow in patronizing the movies. The Criterion in the block below is always crowded, I've heard, and judging from the announcements are running many inferior films—that is, inferior to anything we supply, and have supplied to the Savoy at any stage of its existence. The same conditions obtain at the Crescent, two blocks above. That is all the opposition the Savoy had to contend with. With our line of films I see no reason why Jackson shouldn't have done a land office business."

"What did he do before he bought out the Savoy?"

"I think he was in the real estate business."

"Just so. It seems to be the impression that anybody can run a moving picture show successfully. I know of a butcher, who would hardly have thought of embarking in the grocery or stationery business, who took to the movies like a duck to water. He fitted up a place in a new neighborhood, and expected to make money from the jump. After running for several weeks, and losing money after the second, he sold out to a man who answered his advertisement. In a month the new proprietor was doing first rate, and the last I heard of him he was putting money away every week. He had the instincts of the showman, while the ex-butcher hadn't."

"I don't believe that Jackson was handicapped on account of having been in real estate. I've seen and talked with him a couple of times a week since he took hold of the Savoy, and

he struck me as a man adapted to the movies. I dropped in several times when the show was on, and I found a paying crowd there. I hung around and heard the comments on the films, and they were generally favorable. I figured that the show was striking its gait under Jackson, so you can imagine what a surprise it was to me when I saw that sign this afternoon. I nearly dropped."

"As I'm not a mind reader, I can't surmise what the trouble is. You say you called at his flat and couldn't get in?"

"Yes."

"Maybe there's been a mix-up between him and his wife. Many a man has found himself in unexpected difficulties for that reason."

"Admitting such to be the fact, I don't see why it should cause him to close up a business that gave every prospect of proving successful."

"I don't know that it should. I merely advanced the suggestion without knowing whether there's anything in it or not."

"The unexpected closing of the Savoy shuts our films out of that neighborhood, so I got after Spencer of the Criterion again, and tried to induce him to come over to us, but he wouldn't hear to it. He says he's doing all right with the line he is using. In any case, he says his contract holds him to the Vitrix people."

"When does it expire?"

"He wouldn't say."

"How about the Crescent?"

"They take from the trust, too."

"Well, keep your eye on the Savoy, and don't let the new man get away from you."

"I won't if I can help it."

That closed the interview, and after hanging around the office a little while, Duncan Scott left.

Duncan was a smart boy who, after losing an office position downtown, through no fault of his own, was hired by the United Film Corporation as one of its business solicitors, and had made good.

He had been with this company several months, and was well up in that particular branch of the moving picture business.

He had also had opportunities, through occasional visits to the studios of the film producers, to familiarize himself in a general way with the methods by which moving pictures were made.

He had made the acquaintance of the leading professional people, male and female, who, by their artistic efforts, had contributed to the success of the films handled by the corporation that employed him.

Among these he counted Richard Carter, leading man, and Miss Norma Leslie, leading ingenue and character artist, as his particular friends.

As he was walking up the street he met Carter.

"Hello, Duncan; off duty?" said Carter.

"Yes, for the present."

"Anything new?"

"The Savoy movie I told you about which changed hands so often, and I thought was coming out all right under the new owner, Jackson, has closed again."

"You don't say. Gone under again, eh? It seems to be an unlucky house."

"I can't see why it should be unlucky."

"I think the facts speak for themselves. How many times has it failed?"

"Five."

"And all inside of a year?"

"Inside of less than six months."

"Worse and worse. If I were looking for a motion picture plant, and was offered that place cheap, I wouldn't touch it with a ten-foot pole."

"Think it isn't lucky?"

"Lucky! I should say not. There's a good healthy hoodoo in full possession. The only thing that place is good for is to be turned into a shop. What was it before it was made into a movie?"

"It was a large grocery store."

"Did the grocer fail?"

"No. He's got another store in the next block."

"Why did he change his quarters? Do you know?"

"His lease ran out, and Benson, the man who originally fitted up the place as a motion picture house, and named it the Savoy, offered more money for the store than he was willing to give, so he had to move."

"I guess he didn't want to move if he was getting on all right. Naturally, it hurts a man's business to have to change his quarters. I'll bet he laid a sort of curse on the place to get square, and that's the cause of all the trouble."

"Pooh! I don't take any stock in that sort of thing."

"Well, I do, for I've seen it work."

"You imagine you have."

"No imagination about it. Two years ago I had a room with a family in an apartment house. The family underneath were English. The lady got into a scrap with the physician who occupied the first floor over a pet dog she had. The result of the tangle was a notice was served on them by the landlord to move. They moved, but the landlord never could rent that flat—at least not as long as I kept track of the house. Before that he never had an apartment idle two days. In fact, he had a waiting list. A few months later another apartment voluntarily became vacant, and it was taken right off the reel, but though dozens of persons looked at the apartment over the doctor, nobody took it. Everybody thought it was awfully funny, for it was really the best apartment in the house and worth the rent asked. It finally became the talk of the house and the neighborhood that the English woman had cursed the place because she was dispossessed, and the opinion so grew that a tenant never could be found to take it," said Carter.

"Then you think the grocer did the same thing when the landlord raised his rent, and, as he wouldn't pay it, he was obliged to move his store?"

"I have an idea he might have done something like that to get square with the landlord."

"The landlord hasn't suffered any. He gets his rent right along whether the moving picture business is in operation or not. The lease has been passed along the line, and Jackson is the responsible party now."

"If he hasn't any money his responsibility won't amount to much. Hello, see who we have here," said Carter.

Coming toward them, Duncan saw Norma Leslie and a professional friend.

The four came together and expressed the pleasure they felt at the unexpected meeting.

Duncan was introduced to Norma's friend, Miss Maud Fuller.

"Where are you folks bound?" asked Carter.

"Nowhere in particular. We're just taking a stroll before dinner," said Miss Leslie.

"Then turn back and accompany us," said Carter, pairing off with Miss Fuller and leaving Miss Leslie to Duncan, which just suited that lad, and maybe the young lady as well, for he was a bit smitten with the young and pretty actress.

In the course of the walk Duncan told Norma about the continued ill-luck attending the Savoy moving picture house.

"Dear me, those men can't know much about the show business," she said. "I never heard of an amusement place going under so often in such a short time under different managers."

"Well, Benson, the man who fitted the place up, struck me as a capable man. I secured his custom for the United Film Company. When he sold out, without giving any reason that I heard of, his successor continued with us. I had no difficulty in holding his successor, the man after him, and finally Jackson, the present proprietor, in line. It is very singular what the trouble is with the show. It certainly wasn't the films, for we never put out a poor one; nor did it appear to be the lack of patronage, for that neighborhood is able to support three movies. Some of the people go every night. The boy who works in the drug store in the same block with the Savoy told me that Jackson turned people away Saturday and Sunday nights from both shows, and yet the place was closed at two this afternoon, and bore the sign 'For Sale.' I am satisfied there is something very odd back of it, and I am going to find it out if I can. The house closed just as suddenly each time, without the least indication beforehand of what was going to happen," said Duncan.

"Almost mysterious, isn't it?" laughed Miss Leslie.

"It is kind of mysterious when you come to think of it. I'm going to call on Jackson to-night and ask him what the trouble is—if I can see him."

"If you find there is anything unusual in the case you must tell me, for I dearly love mysteries."

"I wish I were a mystery, then," said Duncan, nervily.

"Dear me, why so?" exclaimed Miss Leslie, not catching on.

"Why, you said you dear—I mean you remarked that you were interested in mysteries, and so—that is—"

The young lady saw the point now and she blushed vividly. At that moment something happened.

CHAPTER II.

DUNCAN DISTINGUISHES HIMSELF.

Around the corner swung a motor car.

A pretty and stylishly-dressed child of eight, holding on to the hand of a maid, had just left the curb to cross the street.

The chauffeur of the car saw their peril, shut off power and blew his horn.

The maid uttered a scream, let go the hand of the little girl, and jumped out of the way.

The child, paralyzed with fright, made no move to follow her.

The machine swooped down on her in spite of the brake, and she would have been knocked down and run over but for quick action on the part of Duncan Scott.

He sprang forward, seized the child in his arms, and as he was in the act of trying to clear the machine, was struck and thrown a dozen feet away.

Miss Leslie uttered a scream, thinking he was killed, and Carter rushed to pick him up.

A crowd began to gather in a twinkling, and the machine came to a stop.

To the surprise and relief of the beholders, Duncan, after rolling over two or three times, with the child closely held in his arms, sat up and then rose to his feet, apparently uninjured by the shock.

At that moment a gentleman pushed his way through the crowd and rushed up to Duncan as he was placing the frightened child on her feet.

He grabbed the child in his arms in a convulsive way.

"Effie, Effie, my darling, are you hurt?" he cried, in a tone that expressed his feeling.

"Papa," cried the girl, throwing her arms around his neck.

"Are you hurt, tell me?" he repeated.

"I'm so frightened," was all he could get out of her.

However, it was soon found that she was not hurt in the least.

Then the gentleman turned to Duncan.

"My brave lad, you saved her life. I can never thank you enough. Tell me your name, that I may know to whom I am under such a great obligation."

"Duncan Scott," said the lad, while Carter was brushing the dirt and dust off his clothes.

"You are a splendid fellow, young man, and I won't forget what you have done for my little daughter. Here is my card. Call on me to-morrow."

Duncan took the card and looked at it.

"Arthur Westbrook," it read, "No. — Wall Street, New York City. Westbrook Motor Company, Findlay, Ind."

"Now don't fail to call on me to-morrow any time between ten and four," said Mr. Westbrook, shaking Duncan by the hand again and starting across the street with Effie in his arms to meet the maid, who looked anything but happy.

"By George, old man!" said Carter. "You got out of that by an eyelash. Ye gods, what a scene for a moving picture machine! The director would have had a scenario written around it, and a corking good number would have been turned out. You are the hero of a lost opportunity."

The crowd, which was still growing bigger, regarded Duncan with great interest.

Only a few of them had seen the sensational incident, but an idea of it was passing from mouth to mouth.

The chauffeur, finding that the young fellow was not hurt, took advantage of the conversation between Duncan and Mr. Westbrook, to return to the machine and get away, hoping to avoid arrest.

After the car was gone a policeman came along and, forcing his way into the crowd, reached the spot where Duncan and Carter stood.

He learned all the facts from them, took them down in his notebook, together with their names, the little girl's and her father's.

Then Duncan and the actor rejoined their ladies on the sidewalk.

After Norma Leslie recovered from her scare at seeing the accident, and perceiving that Duncan was not hurt to all appearances, she was filled with admiration for his plucky act.

"Oh, I am so glad you escaped!" she exclaimed, seizing him by the arm, and flashing a look of intense interest in his face. "You are a real hero, Mr. Scott."

"Thank you for thinking so, Miss Leslie. Such commendation from your lips fully repays me for the risk I took," replied the young fellow, giving her a look that brought a whole bunch of roses into her cheeks.

"Are you quite sure you are not hurt in the least?" she said, with some anxiety in her voice and eyes.

"As far as I know I'm not," he answered. "I regard myself as very fortunate in not being a candidate for a hospital. When the car hit and hurled me ahead I hardly knew anything for some moments. It was an awful shock. Just as if a house fell on you. I say that without knowing just how it feels to have a house to fall on you, for I have never experienced the sensation. On the whole, I have no overwhelming desire to repeat my performance even for the benefit of the moving picture business in which I naturally feel a great interest."

"Allow me to congratulate you on your fortunate escape, Mr. Scott," now put in Miss Fuller, who had been itching for a chance to express herself.

All women love a real hero, and actresses are no exception to the rule, even if accustomed to being in continual touch with stage heroes.

"You are certainly a brave young man," continued Miss Fuller, gushingly. "I do love anything sensationally heroic in real life. I am sure I shall see you in my dreams to-night repeating your rescue of the little girl. Such a thriller could never be introduced into a moving picture without a dummy."

"The dummy would have my sympathy," laughed Duncan.

Miss Fuller was showing so much interest in Duncan that Norma began to experience a feeling of jealousy, and, tugging the lad by the arm, suggested that they had better go on.

Miss Fuller, however, wasn't to be shaken off.

She hung on the other side of Duncan, which put Carter on the outside of the four, and they proceeded in that way for a block when Carter, feeling that he was being slighted by the lady in whom he felt a special interest, remarked that he guessed he and Scott wouldn't go any further, unless the ladies particularly desired their company.

Miss Leslie hailed this as a chance to get her friend away from Duncan, though she would have tried to hang on to the young hero had she had him all to herself.

She and Maud Fuller were dear friends or chums, it is true, but there was danger at that moment that Duncan Scott might prove the rock on which their friendship would split.

Norma had suddenly awakened to the fact that Duncan was a whole lot more to her than was Maud Fuller.

She had admired him in a general way before, but now she wanted to assert a proprietorship in him to the exclusion of anybody else.

At the same time she was perverse enough to desire to be won by a regular siege, holding the object of her interest in

suspense until she finally capitulated to "the sweetest story ever told."

But with Scott showing a polite interest in Miss Fuller, and her dear friend using the full battery of her charms upon him, Norma scented danger, and the "green-eyed monster" that sleeps somewhere in everybody's heart began to arouse itself and take notice.

"Come, Maud, we must hurry, or we shall be late for dinner," she said. "Good-by, Mr. Scott, I am awfully glad to have met you this afternoon, and I hope we shall—"

"Oh, don't mind, Norma," interrupted Miss Fuller. "We have lots of time, Mr. Scott. We don't have dinner till half-past six, and even then there is no certainty that it will materialize on the minute. The old dragon we are boarding with is growing more careless about meal hours every day. She's had a grouch on ever since Billy Day, the comedian, vanished with his suit-case by way of the fire-escape, leaving a two weeks' board bill unsettled. She watches the rest of us now like a hawk, though I am sure Norma and I owe her nothing. I suppose it is because she suspects Tessie Stewart is going to skip if she can get her trunk out. I know Tessie hasn't paid up this week. Tessie is in hard luck. After resting three weeks she caught on at Zammerstein's this week. But, poor thing, her turn was a frost at the matinee on Monday and she was cut out of the bill."

Miss Leslie, however, was determined to get her friend away from Duncan, and as Carter sided with her, the party broke up and Duncan and the actor crossed the street and turned down.

Three blocks further on they separated, each going toward his own boarding-house.

Duncan lived with a Mrs. Jenkins, a professional boarding-house lady, whose establishment was generally always full of steady people, consisting of three Sixth avenue clerks, two young lady stenographers who roomed together, and were both smitten with Duncan, though he was not at all interested in them, two married couple, and two or three widows living on their incomes.

Everybody knew that Duncan was connected with the moving picture industry, and the three clerks regarded him with envy because they believed he was making good money and had easy hours compared with their own.

They didn't know that the boy was more or less always on the job, for he was ambitious to make his mark in the world, and he had to rely wholly on his own exertions.

There is no more sentiment in the moving picture industry than there is in any other kind of business, and he had to earn his money to get it.

His father and mother were alive, but they lived in a small city up the State which did not offer inducements sufficient to keep the boy at home.

New York has always been the Mecca of his hopes, and he had now been in the metropolis a year and a half.

CHAPTER III.

DUNCAN INTERVIEWS JACKSON.

After dinner that evening Duncan started uptown to call on Jackson, proprietor of the Savoy.

The Criterion was in the block below and was brilliantly lighted up when he reached it.

Spencer, the owner, was outside, looking at his display of paper.

He knew Duncan well, as the boy had tried to secure his custom for the United Film Corporation and failed.

He also knew that Duncan had kept the trust out of the Savoy.

He grinned at the boy this evening.

"The Savoy has gone up the spout again," he said.

"I know it."

"That's pretty good evidence that your films don't take in this neighborhood. The people are discriminating and want the best."

"Well, the Independent films are the best in the country."

"Looks like it, doesn't it, when the one house that runs them up here goes under five times running, while my show, and the Crescent above here, who take from your rivals, are turning people away almost every night."

"It isn't on account of inferior films that the Savoy closed up."

"What then?"

"That's what I came up to find out."

Spencer laughed derisively.

"Do you want me to tell you?" he said.

"Yes, if you know."

"It's because the Crescent and this place fill the bill. A third show is not wanted. We two pull the people. There aren't enough left over to fill a third show."

"That's funny. I heard from a party who knows that the Savoy turned people away from both shows last night."

"All nonsense!" Spencer said. "If Jackson was doing so well he wouldn't have a sign up to-day offering his place for sale."

"He told me on Monday that he has been doing well from the start."

"And to-day he's trying to sell out. Say, did you ever hear of any one who was anxious to get out of a paying business?"

"I can't say that I have."

"Jackson is either trying to do it or he isn't making the place go. Common sense indicates that the last is the true reason."

"I admit the inference is in line with your statement, but I don't believe it is the true reason why Jackson has thrown up his hands. I have a suspicion that some kind of a jinx is responsible for the singular sudden closing of the Savoy. I'm going to see if it can't be caught and put out of business."

"The place is a Jonah. It's what the French call de trop—that is, in the way. My show and the Crescent cover the ground. The Savoy will never go as a moving picture theater."

"If I had the money I'd open the place myself and prove to you that your statement is false."

"You'd be the sixth unfortunate."

"Would I? I'll bet I'd make your show and the Crescent hustle to keep your doors open."

"You're talking rag-time, young man."

"All right. Maybe the next owner will catch the jinx and prove my statement. Good-night."

Duncan walked on.

He found a number of people in front of the Savoy, which was dark, reading the "For Sale" sign and commenting on it.

He tried the two doors and found them locked.

He had hoped to find Jackson on the premises, but he wasn't.

He passed the Crescent and found the public flocking into it.

He turned up the next street, and in ten minutes reached Jackson's flat.

This time when he rang he got admission, and walked up to the third floor.

"Is Mr. Jackson at home?" he asked the servant.

"Yes; come in."

Jackson had evidently not been home long, for he was eating his supper.

"Hello, Scott," he said. "Take a seat. Have a glass of lager?"

"No, I don't drink. I came to learn why the Savoy isn't open, and also why it is for sale. I thought you were doing well."

"Well, I have been running to good business. Last night the house was jammed to the doors at both shows; but at noon to-day I decided that I was needed more in Chicago than I was here, hence the sign. Know anybody who wants to buy? I'll sell out cheap."

"Say, Mr. Jackson, what's the real reason why you want to get out of the Savoy?"

"I've told you—I have to go to Chicago."

"I never heard you speak of Chicago as an attraction before."

"It is a better show town than New York."

"That's new to me."

"And it's my old stamping grounds."

"Why did you buy the Savoy, then?"

"I expected to remain here, but matters over which I have no control altered things."

"The four previous owners of the house all gave reasons on a line with yours in explaining why they wanted to cut loose from the Savoy. The five of you have each run the place something less than a month. This rapid succession of managers is a mighty singular thing in the face of the prospects the house held out. Are you sure you haven't some other reason for giving up?"

"Of course not," said Jackson, but Duncan didn't believe him.

"I'm afraid you won't find a purchaser as easy as the others did."

"Why not? The Savoy is bound to make money under the direction of the right man."

"But you're not a blacksmith at the business."

"No, I flatter myself that I understand the show business."

"And yet you are letting a good thing get away from you."

"I can't help it. My luck, I suppose."

"What do you want for the place?"

"I'll take \$3,000, or even less, from a quick buyer."

"If I had \$2,500, I'd make you an offer."

"Can't you raise half among your friends and advertise for a partner?"

"I'm afraid not," replied Duncan.

"Get me a man who will put up \$3,000 for the Savoy as it stands, and I'll give you ten per cent. of that amount," said Jackson. "There's a chance for you, but you've got to move lively."

"I'll see what I can do for you. There was a man in our office the other day who is looking for a moving picture theater."

Find him and bring him up here to-morrow at one."

"Will you be at the theater?"

"No—here."

"If I found you a purchaser it would be better for you to meet him at the Savoy. It would save time, for you'd have to take him there, anyway."

"I'll be there from noon till half-past, and from one till half-past."

"All right."

"You remarked that I wouldn't be able to find a purchaser as easy as the other owners did. What makes you think I won't?"

"Because the house is getting the reputation of being a Jonah. That's what Spencer, of the Criterion called it tonight. If intending purchasers learn that, you won't be able to sell at any price."

"Spencer had better keep his opinion to himself if he knows when he's well off," growled Jackson.

"When a theater is opened and closed by five different proprietors inside of six months, you can't blame anybody calling it a Jonah."

"You said if you could raise \$2,500 you'd take it over. That doesn't look as if you thought it was a Jonah."

"I don't. I believe it has a jinx, though, and the first thing I'd do would be to find it and send it to the morgue."

A sickly grin spread over Jackson's face for a moment.

"Some jinxes can't be got rid of so easily," he said.

Duncan gave him a sharp look.

"Then you admit it has a jinx?" said Scott.

"I admit nothing."

"Your manner intimates it."

"You only imagine that."

"Come now, own up. What kind of a jinx is it that's got control of the Savoy?"

"No jinx at all," answered Jackson, hastily. "All the place needs to make a success is a man who knows how to run it right, and has a little money behind him."

"Benson, the man who fitted the place up, filled the bill in that respect, yet he seemed glad to sell out in a month. Smith, who bought him out, had money and moving picture experience. He told me after he was there four days that the Savoy was going to prove a gold mine. Ten days later the house was closed and Smith was looking for a buyer. I don't know much about his two successors, but I did think you'd make it pan out. You haven't kept it open a day longer than Smith. You can talk as you like, Jackson, but there's some mystery behind all this. You don't want to admit it because you're afraid you'd queer your chances for selling out. Well, I don't blame you, if you're determined to sell, but no mystery would frighten me off from the Savoy if I could find the cash to buy you out."

"You think you could smother the jinx, eh?" said Jackson, with another sickly grin.

"I've got a level head and don't believe in jinxes in the way some persons do. Sailors and theatrical people seem to shy at the least thing in that line. The stories of stage hoodooes I've heard would make a book, and most of them would make a horse laugh. Even baseball players can see a jinx in the bat-bag if the team encounters a sudden batting slump and can't explain it away. Why, I was hit by an automobile to-day and knocked ten feet or more. I suppose some jinx was responsible for that."

"You were hit by an automobile and knocked ten feet?" said Jackson, incredulously. "You don't show it."

"Because I escaped without a scratch."

"You were lucky. Where did it happen?"

"Corner of Broadway and Thirty-eighth street. I saved a little girl from getting run over."

"Played the hero, eh? How came the little girl to get in the way of the machine?"

Duncan told him all the particulars.

"Her father's name is Arthur Westbrook. I've got his card in my pocket."

He pulled it out and showed it to Jackson.

"Westbrook Motor Company," read the owner of the Savoy. "That's a big automobile company. I've seen their plant out in Findlay. It covers a city block. Look here, Scott, if you saved that gent's daughter from getting run over he is surely grateful to you. It ought to be a cinch for you to negotiate a loan with him to set you up in the motion picture business. If I were you I'd strike him at once for \$5,000. I'll sell you the Savoy for half of that, and you'll have the balance to fall back on and fight the jinx."

"I wouldn't ask him for a cent. I don't want to be paid for doing my duty," said Duncan.

"A loan ain't taking the money outright. You will pay him back in a few months, with interest. Why, this is the chance of your life, young man."

Duncan shook his head.

"I couldn't ask him for a loan even to buy out the Savoy," he said, getting up to go.

Five minutes later he was on the street, but somehow or another Jackson's suggestion followed him all the way downtown to his boarding-house.

CHAPTER IV.

BUYING A HOODOO.

As Duncan had business which took him down to the vicinity of the post-office, he found time to go to Wall Street about eleven and call on Arthur Westbrook.

He sent his name in and was immediately admitted.

"Glad to see you, Scott. Take a seat," said the gentleman, who was acting as Eastern representative for the motor company his father was president of and chief stockholder in.

As Duncan entered he pulled a letter out of a pigeon-hole and laid it before him.

It bore the signature of Jackson, owner of the Savoy.

That astute individual had seen the account of Duncan's exploit in the morning paper, and decided that he would put the boy in the way of getting the money necessary to buy him (Jackson) out.

The particular reason he did this was because he feared that the Savoy would be hard to sell under existing circumstances, and he was anxious to get it off his hands at the earliest possible moment before the newspapers made comment on its Jonahesque properties.

It was a nervy and impudent thing to do, but then Jackson was equal to anything except continuing the management of the Savoy.

He put a special delivery stamp on the envelope, and Mr. Westbrook received it shortly before Duncan called.

He was a bit surprised at the nature of its contents, which ran as follows:

"MR. ARTHUR WESTBROOK—DEAR SIR: Excuse the liberty I am taking in the interest of a young man who I see by the morning paper has rendered you a very great service. This young man is, as you know, Duncan Scott, of the United Film Corporation. He would like to buy out a moving picture theater I am about to dispose of, but he has no money. The place is easily worth \$3,500, for it is in a crowded neighborhood, and everybody goes to the movies two or three times a week, nowadays, but I will let it go to Scott for \$2,500, because I take an interest in his success. He ought to have \$2,500 to hold as a reserve fund, though I hardly think he will need to draw on more than enough to get things moving. Now if you will force a loan of \$5,000 on him for six months at six per cent. interest, you will do him a business favor without costing you a dollar. When I say force I mean it, for he won't ask you for it under any circumstances. He told me he wouldn't accept money for doing his duty. Some people are built that way. As I have several offers under consideration, I trust if you can see your way to giving Scott a lift that you will lose no time about it. I want to see him get the theater, as I know he wants it, but I can't allow sentiment to interfere with my business, for I am due in Chicago next Monday."

"Respectfully yours,

"WILLIAM JACKSON,

"— Prospect Ave."

"I called as you asked me to, Mr. Westbrook," began Duncan. "I hope your little daughter suffered no material shock after the accident."

"None at all," replied Westbrook, cheerfully. "She feels as grateful to you as a child of her years can be expected to do. So also does my wife, who was much upset when she learned of the occurrence. We had to discharge the maid, for we cannot afford to keep a girl in charge of our little one who is liable to lose her presence of mind in any emergency. Of course, we understand that the maid didn't mean to expose our Effie to peril, but we relied on her to protect the child, which she failed to do, and but for you our little one would probably have been killed. I hope you will understand that words cannot express our gratitude to you; it would therefore greatly please me if you mention some way that I could be of service to you. I would like to testify my appreciation in some substantial way."

"I can understand your feelings, Mr. Westbrook, but there is no occasion for you to feel bound to do me any favor. I have a fair position with the United Film Corporation, in the motion picture trade, and I am getting along all right."

"But you saved my daughter at the risk of your life. In fact, you were hit by the machine, which I understand the police are looking for in order to arrest the chauffeur, and you must have suffered somewhat from the shock."

"I am thankful to say that the shock was only a momentary one, though it was not a sensation I would care to have repeated. When I saw your little daughter in such imminent peril I acted on the spur of the moment, for I hadn't a moment to consider the risk. I believed it was my duty to act as I did, and it is repugnant to me to accept anything that savors of recompense for risking my life for another. That is one thing I regard as above price."

"Your sentiments do you credit, Scott, but still I think you ought to allow me to do something for you."

"No, sir, not a thing. Your grateful thanks are all I ask of you."

The gentleman tapped the letter reflectively.

"You say you are connected with the motion picture business?"

"Yes, sir."

"In what capacity?"

Duncan explained the duties of his position.

"Have you ever thought of running a moving picture theater yourself?"

"Yes, sir. I hope to some day."

"Are you capable of managing such an establishment now?"

"As I have been constantly visiting such shows in the line of my business, and have taken note of the methods followed by the different managers, and have talked with these men a hundred times, I think I am competent to manage a show. I have had opportunities to see motion pictures developed from the first stage upward, and know exactly how they are produced. Of course, all this knowledge would not necessarily make one a successful exhibitor. A man must have the instincts of a showman in order to cater successfully to the public. He must be able to judge what will take in his particular neighborhood. He has got to have the knack of pleasing all the people all the time. This is no easy job when you consider the diversity of tastes a moving picture manager is up against. Fortunately the companies that turn out the films aim to reach the same result. The motion pictures of to-day are a vast improvement on what they were a year or two ago, just as the phonographs of to-day put it all over the machine of ten years ago. But I mustn't take up your time, Mr. Westbrook. You are doubtless a busy man, and I, too, have my work to look after."

"One moment, if you please. Have you a motion picture house in your mind that you would like to buy out?"

"I admit that if I had the price and a little over, I would buy the Savoy movie way uptown."

"What is the price the owner wants?"

"He wants \$3,000, but he offered it to me for \$2,500. He has promised me a ten per cent. rake-off if I can find him a buyer at the former price."

"I presume you are familiar with the theater and the neighborhood, and what profit there is in the place under favorable conditions?"

"Yes, sir. I wouldn't think of buying a pig in a poke."

"You consider that the Savoy is worth \$2,500 as an amusement venture?"

"It couldn't be duplicated for that money anywhere. The decorations are unusually good, much superior to its nearest competitors. Its seating capacity is 400, with standing room at the back and sides for approximately 100 more. Alto-

gether it is a good example of a first-class motion picture house."

"It is doing good business, I suppose?"

"It was until Jackson closed it for some unexplainable reason."

"Then it is not running now?"

"No, sir, but I don't mind that. It will draw the moment it opens its doors again."

"Will you accept the loan from me of a sum sufficient for you to buy this theater and start it?" asked Mr. Westbrook.

Duncan regarded him with some surprise.

"I haven't any security to offer you for it," he said.

"Your note of hand is enough. It can run for six months, without interest, and should it not be convenient for you to pay it then, I will renew it for as long as you wish."

"Your offer rather astonishes me, Mr. Westbrook, but I suppose you wish to pay your obligation in that form."

"I wish to help you to realize your ambition of owning a motion picture house, which doubtless will prove profitable under your management. Shall I make the note out for \$5,000? That will give you a sum to hold in reserve."

"I will accept \$3,500. If I can't make the house pay from the start I shall be very much surprised."

"Very well; but if you should need more money, I hope you will ask me for it."

The note was made out by Mr. Westbrook and signed by Duncan.

The gentleman then drew his check, payable to the order of William Jackson, for \$2,500, at Duncan's request, and a second check for \$1,000, payable to Duncan Scott or bearer.

Duncan then took his leave, promising to keep his patron advised of his headway as manager of the motion picture theater.

He cashed the \$1,000 check at Westbrook's bank, and took the money uptown with him.

Promptly at one o'clock he appeared at the Savoy and found Jackson outside.

"Well," said the proprietor, "have you done anything toward getting me a customer?"

"Yes. I have raised the money to buy you out."

"You got it of Westbrook."

"How do you know I did?"

"I expected you would."

"Didn't I tell you I wouldn't ask him for a loan?"

"Yes; but he offered it to you of his own accord."

"You seem to be a pretty good guesser."

"I am," chuckled Jackson.

"It's too bad you didn't guess what was going to happen when you bought this place out."

"That's right, but I didn't. You want to go inside and inspect the house, of course. Come on, then we'll go to a lawyer and have the transfer effected in legal form."

Donald went all over the establishment, and found that it was in full working order, ready to be reopened at any moment.

"If you want to hire my ticket seller, the machine operator, pianist and other people, I will give you their addresses," said Jackson as they stepped into the little box office. "I owe nobody anything. I will transfer my lease to you and you can pay the landlord his rent when he comes around next week. The rent is—" here Jackson named the amount. "Here are my books. Sit down and run over them. They contain a complete record of the receipts and expenses of the show since I've had the house. You will notice as you go over the books that the balance is in favor of the theater."

"That only emphasizes the fact that you had some remarkable reason for closing up in a hurry."

"Well, never mind my reason. You may have better luck."

"I hope so," said Duncan, looking over the record of daily receipts. They began low and gradually increased in volume.

"You have brought the purchase price—\$2,500?" asked Jackson, after Duncan finished his inspection.

"Yes."

"Then we will hunt up a lawyer and put the matter through."

A lawyer was found and the deal consummated. Donald handing Jackson Mr. Westbrook's check, which he had had certified.

When the transfer was completed and Duncan had the key of the Savoy in his pocket, he turned to Jackson as they came out on the sidewalk, and said:

"Now that you are out of the Savoy, and have your money, there is no further reason for you to conceal any mystery that you have found out in connection with the theater. I expect you will enlighten me on the subject."

"I have nothing to tell you except this—the house is hoodooed."

"Hoodooed!" said Duncan, incredulously. "In what way?"

"You'll have to find that out for yourself. There is something wrong with the place, that's all I know."

"When did you find that out?"

"Yesterday at noon," said Jackson, with a shifty look.

"It must be something mighty serious to cause you to close up right away on top of the fine business you showed to last night."

Jackson shrugged his shoulders.

"I don't think it fair on your part to leave me in the dark when you can enlighten me. Forewarned is forearmed, and it would be a friendly act on your part, now that I have relieved you of what seems to have unexpectedly become a burden to you, to forewarn me so that I may know what to expect and take precautions toward protecting myself."

"When I bought my predecessor out he did not forewarn me. He unloaded the show on me and never breathed a word about the hoodoo. I have told you more than he told me—that the place is hoodooed. I need not have told you, but I have. I threw up my hands the moment I saw how things were going. If you can lift the jinx you will have a gold mine in the Savoy. That's all. I wish you luck, but I'm afraid you'll close as suddenly as the rest of us have been obliged to do, in which event lose no time in finding some sucker with \$2,500 and get out from under."

Thus speaking, Jackson walked away like a man relieved of a load, leaving Duncan Scott with plenty of food for thought.

CHAPTER V.

TRYING TO FIND OUT THE JINX.

"Well," said the boy, looking after Jackson, "I'm forewarned in one respect—that I'm up against a mystery of considerable proportions. So the Savoy is hoodooed. It will have to be a mighty healthy hoodoo that will get my goat," he muttered, squaring his jaws aggressively.

He walked down to the theater, unlocked one of the doors and went in.

The big room looked dark and lonesome with its double row of seats and the aisle between, facing the square white canvas on which the films were projected.

Two double doors opened off the side aisles, with red electric globes above them, denoting that they were emergency exits.

They were secured by heavy bolts that could be drawn in a moment, and they opened outward.

There were two windows in the rear, but these were closed in by shutters and hidden from sight by the screen. Underneath which was a raised platform about a foot deep.

At one side was a closed upright piano with a chair for the performer.

Above the box-office, which curled outward into the entrance corridor, and had a glass front where the ticket seller sat, was the loft where the picture machine stood with its accessories.

It was fairly roomy up there, and was reached by a narrow flight of stairs connecting with a door.

The lights were controlled by a kind of "governor" inside the box office, and easily reached by one standing just outside the door.

Benson, the original proprietor, had installed the lighting arrangements on a somewhat different plan than usually followed, as he had his own ideas on the subject, and he could produce special effects.

Some of these effects were necessary, and though he had explained them to his successor, that individual had never used them, and when he sold out in his turn had not called his successor's attention to them.

Jackson had noticed the small levers at the back, wondered what they were there for, but did not investigate their utility.

Duncan had merely glanced at the "governor" in going over the place.

He was familiar with the ordinary lighting of motion picture houses, and he did not consider it necessary to inspect it.

Duncan found writing materials in the office, and he addressed a postal card to each of Jackson's late employees, and asked them to call on the following day at noon.

This done, he considered his plan of operations.

He was afraid that the several closings of the house had given the place "a black eye" in the estimation of the public, though he didn't believe that would amount to much, since the Savoy was a very comfortable and attractive theater, much superior to either the Criterion or the Crescent, and he did not doubt with the line of films furnished by the United Film

Corporation but the public would flock in right from the start. As he reflected over the situation it suddenly struck him that the appearance of the jinx had, in each case, occurred just as the Savoy was striking a prosperous gait.

Benson's career had been the shortest of the five, and the singularity of it was it had been the most prosperous, according to his books.

The new house was not viewed with favor by the proprietors of the other two theaters that were enjoying a monopoly of the patronage.

Naturally, they scented a dangerous rival in the field.

When Benson suddenly closed down, the owners of the two rival houses shook hands and congratulated each other.

Duncan thought he saw the wool of a nigger in the woodpile, so to speak.

And yet his suspicions could hardly cover the case.

If any crooked business had been attempted against the Savoy the proprietor would most certainly have put up a fight against it.

No man is going to tamely submit to be buncoed out of a good thing.

Whatever this mysterious jinx was, it appeared to have the power to close the house whenever it chose to do so, and without encountering any opposition from the manager, who, in five separate instances, had meekly folded up his tent and given up a promising proposition.

Duncan was a lad who, when his rights were attacked, would fight to the last ditch.

As he sat there in the little box office and went over the extraordinary record of the motion picture house, he gritted his teeth and once more breathed the defiance that it would "have to be a mighty healthy hoodoo that would get his goat," and he meant it.

His watch pointed at half-past two when he recollects he had had no lunch.

He had a healthy stomach, and that organ notified him of the omission.

There being nothing to detain him longer at the theater, he locked up and went to a restaurant in the next block close to the Criterion.

There he saw Manager Spencer of the Criterion taking a light lunch with an acquaintance.

He grinned at Duncan.

"Has Jackson sold out yet?" he asked.

"You'll have to ask him," replied the lad.

"I hope the next man will have better luck," he chuckled.

"If he has the Criterion will suffer."

"Don't you believe it. The people know where to get the best for their nickels."

"I agree with you. They found the Savoy that place, and if Jackson hadn't got cold feet for some reason, the people in this neighborhood would have had him putting out a 'S. R. O.' sign every night."

"We don't put those signs out. We let the people find that out when they get inside."

"Yes, I guess you do. You've been running something over a year, and Stacey nearly as long. I should think you had made money enough to retire on."

"I haven't made a million yet."

"Expect to make that much out of your show?"

"Not out of one house. I'm negotiating for another downtown."

"You'd better sell the Criterion before the Savoy opens up again."

"I should worry," grinned Spencer, and the conversation ended there.

"I have come to tender my resignation, Mr. Hickey," said Duncan an hour later when he walked into the office of the United Film Corporation.

"What's the matter? Tired of the business?" said the manager.

"No, but I have more important business matters to look after."

"What's that?"

"I've bought out the Savoy motion picture house."

"You've done what?"

Duncan repeated his statement.

"Pick up an angel somewhere?"

"Yes. I've got all the backing I want."

"I hope you'll have better luck than the other owners."

"I trust I may have. It won't be my fault if it doesn't go."

"Got it cheap, I suppose?"

"It's easily worth what I paid for it."

"You ought to know. You've been around among those

places enough to be able to judge what one is worth after you've looked it over."

"I value a motion picture house by the neighborhood it's in. If you can count on four good-sized audiences a day, there's money in it even if it costs you every cent it's worth to acquire it. If you can't depend on filling your house it's dear at any price, for the rent and other standing expenses go on just the same."

"Was Jackson glad to sell?"

"Yes."

"Have you found out the rock on which he split?"

"No. He wouldn't tell me, even after he had the money in his pocket."

"What did his books show?"

"Good and increasing business. He showed to the full capacity of the house, including standing-room, the last three nights, and the house was fairly crowded at the afternoon shows."

"I don't believe it. He must have doctored his books."

"I have the evidence of at least two disinterested eye-witnesses."

"Are you sure they were disinterested?"

"I believe they were. I have no reason to suspect that they were in collusion with Jackson."

"But, my dear fellow, it isn't reasonable for the proprietor of a successful show to shut down in the midst of his prosperity and look around for a successor."

"Not as a rule, but Jackson, after the sale was completed, admitted that he was forced to contend with an unusual obstacle. He wouldn't tell me what the obstacle was. He said I'd find it out in due time myself."

"That's cheerful. You may have been buncoed."

"I'll risk that. The theater is all right, the best of the three in the neighborhood. The prospect of getting full houses is as good as any one could ask for. The license is all right. The obstacle Jackson referred to is simply a jinx."

"A jinx!"

"Anything mysterious and unaccountable may be regarded as a jinx. Jackson's quick exit from a flow of prosperity shows that he has been intimidated by something, and he's afraid even to reveal what it is. The record of his four predecessors so closely resembles his that it is quite clear to me that the same influence, whatever it is, has been exerted on them with equal success. I haven't the least doubt but it will be worked on me just as soon as I show to extra good business."

"And you expect to survive the ordeal, I suppose?" grinned Hickey.

"I may or I may not. No one is invincible over forces that exceed his powers of resistance. All I will say now is that there will be something doing when that jinx tackles me. If I win out you can take it from me that the Savoy will run that neighborhood."

"What kind of jinx do you think it is?"

"I haven't the remotest idea."

"Maybe it's an effort on the part of the trust to run the independent films out of that district."

If it was the trust would have had a purchaser ready to buy Benson out, and then the Savoy would have put on its films."

"Maybe it's a concerted move on the part of the owners of the Criterion and Crescent to drive a dangerous competitor out of their neighborhood."

"That occurred to me, but in that case they would have bought the theater out as soon as it was offered for sale and run it conjointly."

"Well, I give it up."

"You might as well, for I'm satisfied you couldn't guess the riddle. I have come as near to it, I imagine, as one can who is in the dark. It is clearly a case of personal intimidation, so artfully worked that none of the five managers have been able to find a way to protect themselves."

"Admitting that it is, there must be a motive behind it. What is it? Let us go back to Benson, the first owner. We will say he was intimidated into selling a good thing owing to causes over which he had no control. Very good. If there had been an object in forcing him out it would have shown itself then and there, wouldn't it? As soon as he was intimidated the object of the intimidators would have been accomplished. That should have ended the whole business. Instead of which he was allowed to sell out to a man who, according to your surmise, was in his turn intimidated in the same way, and so it's gone on five times, and you have been allowed to take undisputed possession of the house. Common sense is common sense, my dear fellow. There is no sense whatever

in the successive intimidation of five men, when there seems to be no motive whatever in the business. You may think your reasoning all right, but in my opinion it is simply a case of failure to draw business, and the books juggled afterward to catch a buyer," said Hickey.

"All right. We'll let it go at that," said Duncan, getting up and bringing the argument to an end.

CHAPTER VI.

DUNCAN MEETS SOME PROFESSIONAL PEOPLE.

That evening Duncan called at Carter's boarding-house to see his actor friend.

"He's not in," said the servant, much to Duncan's disappointment.

"Do you know where he went?" he asked.

"No, I do not."

"So Duncan had to go away.

He was sorry Carter was not at home, for he wanted to tell him about his acquisition of the Savoy motion picture house.

He knew that the news would greatly surprise the moving picture actor, and would undoubtedly interest him.

Then it occurred to him to call on Miss Leslie and tell her.

He believed she would be pleased to learn that fortune had befriended him.

He had the address of her boarding-house, and, moreover, had been invited to visit her, so he proceeded to do so.

He reached the house, asked for the young actress, and was again disappointed.

She had gone visiting herself that evening.

"Kindly tell her that Duncan Scott called, will you?" he said.

"Certainly. I'll tell her as soon as she comes back," said the maid.

Duncan strolled to Forty-second street, and along that brilliantly lighted thoroughfare where half a dozen or more theaters were in full blast, hoping to meet Carter, whose stamping ground was in that neighborhood.

A moving picture actor named Tom Shirley, with whom Duncan was slightly acquainted, came out of a cafe, saw him and stopped him.

"Glad to see you, Scott. Where bound?"

"Nowhere in particular. I was looking for Richard Carter," said Duncan.

"He went over to call on Miss Maud Fuller, the leading lady of the Atlas Studio. He's kind of sweet on her."

"She rooms with Miss Norma Leslie, on Thirty-ninth street," said Duncan.

"She did until to-day. She and Miss Leslie had a scrap about something—a man, guess, and Miss Fuller pulled up stakes and lit out. She's gone to live with Miss Mamie Mulligan, professionally known as Mignon French, who is in vaudeville, when the stars are propitious. Miss Mulligan and Mabel Joyce are keeping house in a Thirty-eighth street flat. If you're anxious to see Carter, we'll go over there."

"But I'm not acquainted with either Miss Mulligan or Miss Joyce," said Duncan.

"Well, I am, and I'll introduce you. We'll be as welcome as the roses in June."

"I don't want to intrude on Carter and Miss Fuller."

"I should worry about them. Come, let's get a wiggle on. Mamie Mulligan will be delighted to know you. She keeps open house to all her friends, and they are legion. Not to know Miss Mulligan is like being in a bush league."

Tom Shirley caught Duncan by the arm, and the young proprietor of the Savoy simply had to go with him whether he wanted to or not.

They walked down Broadway to Thirty-eighth street, Shirley nodding to several professional friends of the male persuasion they passed, turned eastward, crossed Sixth avenue, and finally came to the Nottingham, a cheap-looking apartment house, whose highly ornamental vestibule brought into strong relief its general tone of shabbiness.

Shirley had evidently been there before, for without the least hesitation his finger punctuated an electric button below which were stencilled the following two names: French, Joyce.

Underneath the latter a narrow slip of card had been inserted which bore the name of Maud Fuller.

A clicking sound indicated that the door was open for them to walk in.

Shirley took the lead, and Duncan followed him to the third landing, where a vision in bleached hair and a pink wrapper stood awaiting their coming.

"This is an unexpected pleasure, Tom Shirley," said the

vision, effusively. "Who's your friend? I don't recognize him."

"Miss Mulligan, Mr. Scott, of the United Film Corporation," said Shirley.

"Delighted to make your acquaintance, Mr. Scott. Come right in and make yourselves at home," said Miss Mulligan. "There's no one here except Mabel," meaning Miss Joyce, "Maud Fuller, who's come to stay with us, as she's tired of boarding, and Dick Carter. I'll do the honors for your friend."

Before she could say another word Maud Fuller, who was occupying a lounge with Carter, bounced up with a little cry of surprise and rushed at Duncan.

"Why, Mr. Scott, this is a delightful surprise. I'm awfully glad to see you. I didn't know you were acquainted with Mamie. I suppose you heard I was here. Move over, Dick," and she squeezed Carter over to make room for Duncan.

Carter nodded to the boy, but he didn't look pleased at his enthusiastic reception by Miss Fuller.

"One moment, please, Maud," interposed Miss Mulligan. "I must introduce Mr. Scott to Mabel," and she proceeded to do so.

Miss Joyce was a statuesque blonde, and she expressed the pleasure she felt at making Duncan's acquaintance.

Tom Shirley, after nodding all around and depositing his hat on top of a pile of theatrical magazines, had subsided into a seat beside Miss Joyce, while Miss Mulligan took possession of a cane rocker, purchased at a bargain sale in a department store.

"Isn't it warm?" she remarked, fanning herself with a coverless copy of a motion picture magazine.

Then she recollects she had left the gas burning at full swing in the little kitchen and flew in there to correct the error.

Miss Fuller, like a rose between two leaves, was endeavoring to hold the attention of both Duncan and Carter, and monopolized all the talk.

When her breath gave out, Duncan ventured to explain how he happened to come to the flat.

"I was looking for you, Carter," he said. "I called at your boarding-house and was told you were not there. Then I went up to Forty-second street, thinking to find you in that neighborhood. There I met Mr. Shirley, who told me I would find you here, and he insisted on bringing me around, so here I am."

"What did you want to see me about?" asked Carter.

"I wanted to tell you the news."

"What news?" asked the actor, showing no particular curiosity.

"I've bought the Savoy motion picture house."

"You have?" cried Carter, incredulously.

"Yes. I am now the owner of the establishment and the jinx attached to it."

"You're joking, aren't you?"

"No. I got the money—borrowed it—from the gentleman whose little daughter I saved yesterday afternoon."

"Upon my word, this is a surprise. When are you going to open up?"

"Saturday afternoon."

Miss Fuller listened with surprised interest.

Then she wanted to know all about the Savoy, and how Duncan came to buy it, and much more to the same effect, all of which the boy endeavored to answer to her satisfaction.

"Say, girls," she exclaimed to her two friends. "What do you think? Mr. Scott has bought a motion picture house uptown—the Savoy, and is going to open on Saturday afternoon."

Duncan's importance rose several notches.

As proprietor of a moving picture theater, his financial stability seemed assured, and that was a comfortable reflection for those acquaintances who might find it necessary to touch him for a loan.

He was congratulated by all hands, and then Miss Mulligan pressed Tom Shirley into the service of helping her transport several bottles of lager from the ice-chest to the dining-room where the party were seated.

"Thank you, I don't drink," said Duncan, when he was presented with the first glass.

"Eh? What's that? You don't drink?" ejaculated Shirley, apparently paralyzed by the announcement. "Oh, yes, I see, ha, ha, ha! You don't drink beer, you mean?"

"I don't drink anything—except water," said the boy, decidedly.

Miss Mulligan had a fit, but recovered herself with an effort.

Fifteen minutes later Duncan suddenly recollects that he

had an engagement and hoped the company would excuse him for tearing himself away.

Miss Fuller appeared disappointed because he couldn't stay longer.

While Mamie Mulligan was hunting for his hat, which she had relieved him of when he entered the room, the door-bell rang, indicating more visitors.

The new arrivals proved to be two young men, known in vaudeville as the "Spinning Whirligigs," but to their friends as Murphy and Fogg.

Duncan was introduced to them and then beat a hasty retreat.

Next day he was at his moving picture show early.

One of the first things he did was to leave an order with a neighboring sign painter for a large canvas sign to fill up the greater part of the entrance.

He furnished the following copy to be inscribed in big letters:

THE SAVOY
Reopens on
SATURDAY AFTERNOON, THE 11TH,
With an Attractive Bill.

At a quarter to twelve the pianist appeared.

He was an experienced performer in his line.

"Are you Mr. Scott?" he said to Duncan.

"Yes."

"My name is MacDonald. I got a postal card from you asking me to call around and see you. What's the matter with Mr. Jackson?"

"I bought him out."

"That so? I suppose you want to engage me for the show?"

"You have the first chance at the job. I suppose you've been here since Jackson opened up?"

"No. I've only worked two days—last Saturday and Sunday. When I dropped around on Monday morning for my pay, Mr. Jackson told me the house would be closed till next Saturday on account of some alterations that had to be made, and I was to report then."

"Indeed," said Duncan, much surprised, for he knew that no alterations had been made, and he saw no need of any. "Then you don't know much about the house?"

"Not much."

"I understand Jackson had big houses on Saturday and Sunday?"

"Packed to the doors in the evening, and every seat occupied in the afternoon," said MacDonald.

This appeared to be confirmatory evidence that Jackson had been doing good business, and backed up the book entries for the two days in question.

After some further conversation with the young man, Duncan engaged him and told him to report for duty on Saturday afternoon.

None of the other late attaches of the house turned up, and Duncan went to lunch, leaving a slip on the door stating that he would be back in half an hour.

On his return from the restaurant he remained on the premises for an hour, but had no visitors, so he locked up and went downtown to attend to necessary business in connection with the opening of his show.

CHAPTER VII.

GETTING READY FOR BUSINESS.

That afternoon he met Norma Leslie on the street.

The encounter was a pleasure to both.

"You called to see me last evening, Mr. Scott," said Norma. "I am so sorry I was out. I hope you will repeat the visit soon. Can't you call on Sunday evening?"

"Yes, I guess I can."

"Then I will expect you. The story of your rescue of the little girl was in the paper yesterday morning."

"I know it. By the way, I want to tell you a bit of news. It will probably surprise you."

"I am listening."

"You remember I told you that the Savoy motion picture house went out of business for the fifth time in six months?"

"Yes."

"It will reopen Saturday afternoon under my management."

"That is news," she said, with a smile. "Have you been hired to run it?"

"No. I have bought the place out."

"Is it possible! I hope you will be able to make it go."

"I shall try mighty hard to do so. The only trouble I apprehend is from the jinx."

"Do you ask, remember you said there was some mystery attached to Thor seemed to be."

"And I promised to let you know all about it when I found out. Well, I called on Jackson next day, but he was as mute on the subject as a mopstick. All I could get out of him was he was looking for a purchaser, and he offered it to me for \$2,500. If he had offered it for half of that I couldn't have taken it, but yesterday morning the money unexpectedly came my way, and I thought it a good chance to get into the game at a fair outlay—the place is really worth more than the price I paid—why, I closed with Jackson, and the show is now mine. After the deal had been put through Jackson admitted there was something wrong with the establishment, but he wouldn't say what it was, other than it was hoodooed."

"Hoodooed!" ejaculated Miss Leslie, looking serious.

"That's what he said, but it's my opinion there is an underlying conspiracy on the part of interested persons to put the theater entirely out of business. I have my suspicions on the subject, but if such be the case it is strange that not one of the five previous owners was able to buck against it. That's where the mystery comes in, I guess."

"It would be awfully disappointing if you didn't make a success of it."

"I'm not worrying about that—yet," smiled Duncan.

"I shall root hard for you to succeed."

"Thank you, Miss Leslie. I knew I could count on your moral support."

"You certainly can," she said, earnestly.

"By the way, you have lost your room-mate, Miss Fuller."

"Yes," said the girl, with a frown. "We had our first tiff, and she decided to make a quick change to apartment life with two professional friends of hers."

"Yes, I know. She's gone to live with Miss Mulligan and Miss Joyce."

"How did you learn that?" said Norma, evidently not pleased that Duncan was so well informed.

"I was around to the flat last evening."

"You were!" flashed the girl, looking a bit angry.

"Yes, quite by accident. I was looking for Carter to tell him about my acquisition of the Savoy, when I ran across Tom Shirley, of the Castle Studio, and he told me I'd be likely to find my friend at the Mulligan-Joyce apartments. As I wasn't acquainted with either of the ladies, I had no intention of going there, but Shirley said he'd take me there, as he was acquainted, and so we went."

"And you met Miss Fuller there, of course," said Norma, with a jealous ring to her tones.

"Yes, she was there, seated on the lounge with Carter."

"You were both awfully glad to see each other so soon again, I dare say?"

"Of course, in a polite way. I did not remain long, however."

"I suppose you received a cordial invitation to call soon again, especially from Maud?"

"Why from Miss Fuller?" asked Duncan, in some surprise. "She has no particular interest in me, nor have I in her. There is only one girl I care anything for, and she's about your size."

It was impossible for Miss Leslie to mistake Duncan's meaning, and she blushed rosily under his ardent look.

Her jealous fancies took flight for the time being, and her heart beat faster than usual.

"Who is the lady?" she said, after a momentary pause.

"I thought you knew her," said Duncan.

"How could I? You have so many lady acquaintances that—"

"You are wrong. I have very few, and none of them interest me but—"

Miss Leslie saw what was coming, and though the word and its meaning was quite in accord with her feelings, still she was coquettish enough to block further talk on the subject.

"Dear me, I didn't know it was so late," she interrupted. "I will have to run along. I'll expect to see you on Sunday—"

"I'm afraid I can't call on Sunday, after all," he said, regretfully.

"Why not?" she asked, blankly. "You said you would come."

"I know I did, and I meant to do so, but I forgot about my moving picture show. It will be open Sunday night. I will have to be on hand to look after it. Can't you come up some afternoon with Carter, or a lady friend?"

"My time is pretty well taken up every day at the studio, except on Sunday."

"Make it Sunday, then. I want you to see the theater. It

is an uncommonly fine little house. Besides, your pre^{seems} nk h^{lf} there might cross the hoodoo."

"If I thought it would I certainly would make it a point to go there."

"Thank you. You said that as if you meant it."

"I do mean it. There is nothing I wouldn't do for—"

Miss Leslie suddenly recollected what she was about to say, and stopped quite abruptly in some confusion.

"For who, Miss Leslie?" said Duncan, grabbing her gloved hand.

"Now really, Mr. Scott, you mustn't ask ridiculous questions," said the girl, with blazing cheeks. "I was thinking about something that happened this morning. It was really too funny for anything. If I had time I'd tell you."

"I beg your pardon," said Duncan, releasing her hand. "I thought we were speaking about the hoodoo, and that you—well, never mind. You will come and see me at the Savoy, won't you?"

There was a pleading earnestness in his tone that went straight to her heart.

Could she refuse anything within reason that he asked of her?

And was she not intensely interested in his venture, as well as curious to inspect the little theater in spite of its uncanny atmosphere?

"Yes, I will come at the very first chance I have," she replied, with a look that encouraged his hopes. "I should be very happy indeed if my presence put the jinx to flight for good."

"She said there was nothing she would do for—who? I wonder if she really meant me? She would make no admission, though she looked guilty when I tried to force her into a corner. You can't get anything on a woman to save your life. I'd give a whole lot to know just how I stand with her. I sometimes think I have a chance, and then again she doesn't— Oh, fudge! there are probably other men who interest her more than I do. And yet she does treat me awfully nice. I almost wish I had never met her, for I shall be on the rack till I learn the truth."

Next morning when he reached the theater the big sign was in its temporary place, an object of considerable attention in the neighborhood.

The little house had had such a checkered career during its short existence that it had become an object of some wonder.

There was no indication in the sign that the place had changed hands this time, but it was taken that way on account of the For Sale sign which had been up Monday afternoon and a part of Tuesday.

The owners of the Criterion and Crescent saw the sign, and they wondered who the sixth victim was.

That he would go the way of the others they did not doubt.

At any rate, they so expressed themselves to each other when they met, as they did every day, for there was no professional jealousy between them—they were united against the common enemy.

They had viewed the establishment of the Savoy as an encroachment on their business, and its final extinguishment was their daily prayer.

They might have bought it out through a third party had they been so minded, and then run it conjointly, but there were reasons why they balked at this, and so the Savoy was left to run itself out of its own accord, as it seemed likely to do.

Duncan was placing his posters of Saturday's bill on exhibition when Spencer came along.

"Hello, what are you up to, Scott? Trying to help a wobbly joint on its feet? The United Films have made a corpse of this place already. Had Benson used the right kind of stuff Stacey and I might have had a slight scare thrown into us, but as his successors have stuck by you, the results have been extremely satisfactory to us. I guess the Savoy is now making its last kick."

"I think it is myself, but it will be strong enough to make some people sit up and take notice," replied the boy.

"Meaning Stacey and me, I suppose?" grinned Spencer.

"If the cap fits, wear it."

Spencer laughed and locked the announcements over.

"You ought to have bought this place out yourself, you seem to take such a lot of interest in it," he said.

"That's what I have done. You don't suppose I'd fool away my time up here for somebody else, do you?"

"Is that a fact, Scott?" said Spencer, in some surprise.

"That's a fact. Now run up to the Crescent and tell the news to Stacey."

"It will keep till to-morrow. I hope you have kissed your

money good-by. I doubt if you'll be able to find a purchaser when you realize that you've been buncoed. The people up here look on the Savoy as a good joke."

"I don't care how they look at it as long as they come up with their nickels."

"You won't take in enough nickels to pay your light bill. Say, what are those small brown squares doing on your bills?"

"Those are pieces of pitch plaster I bought at the drug store across the street."

"What have you got them on the bills for?"

"For their drawing property—to help me draw a full house."

Spencer grinned.

"If you got in a poker game you might stand a show of drawing a full house," he said.

"If I passed around free drinks during the show I might also have a full house. That's the only way you and Stacey will ever get a full house after the Savoy hits its stride."

"The Savoy will never hit anything but the junk heap. I expect to see the sheriff's flag out inside of two weeks unless you have more money to lose than I think you have. A fool there was with money to burn. He put it into a movie concern. In a week he went broke; had his clothes up in soak; and that is the lesson that you have to learn, Scottie, old boy. Ta, ta," and Spencer walked off highly pleased with himself and what he saw ahead of the Savoy.

CHAPTER VIII.

DUNCAN IN THE LIMELIGHT AGAIN.

With the exception of the pianist, none of Jackson's employees answered his postals, and so Duncan procured new ones, and they were on hand Saturday when their services were required.

The first afternoon show began at one and the second at three.

The evening shows began at seven and nine, respectively.

The colored bills, prominently displayed, announced for that day a powerful and gripping story, in three reels, of ruin caused by a Wall Street speculator risking trust funds in the game of chance to save himself when caught in a slump of the market; a thrilling two-reel story of the wild and woolly West, and a couple of one-reel subjects.

The Criterion and Crescent presented bills on a similar scale.

There was no great rush on the part of the public to get into the Savoy, but the house gradually filled up, and Duncan was satisfied with the outlook.

He noticed that many persons did not go to the box-office, but walked right in, deposited their tickets in the box and went to their seats.

As tickets were not sold in advance, Duncan began to take special notice of this circumstance.

He saw that three out of every four people had tickets which they did not purchase at the window.

He got hold of some of these tickets and compared them with the strip tickets sold by the box girl.

He suspected forgery, found they were genuine, but that the numbers did not agree with the numerical order in which they were being issued.

In some cases they were over 1,000 back.

He subsequently found that they were further back than that.

He stopped two boys who had not bought at the window and asked them where they got their tickets.

"Me mother gave them to me," replied one of the lads. "Dey're all right, ain't dey?"

"Yes," said Duncan, taking them, marking them and dropping them into the box. "I wonder," he thought, "if Jackson held out a bunch of tickets and then sold them to somebody to peddle around the neighborhood? More than half of the tickets presented so far represent no money for me. I can't afford to hold up my patrons at the very start. It would create a bunch of trouble, and maybe get the neighborhood down on me and cause the house to be boycotted. I'll have to stand for the loss, but I'd like to know who is responsible for it."

There were about 400 people in the theater when the show began, every seat being occupied as far as Duncan could make out.

He went into the box office again and continued his investigation.

The box girl should have taken in about \$20, instead of which her cash only footed up \$8.75.

Duncan figured that he was over \$12 out.

The second show was fairly crowded, but only \$11.25 had been taken in.

This looked serious, if it was going to keep on.

The house was jammed at both evening shows, fully 1,000 people being present altogether.

This represented \$50, but the box girl had only \$40 to show for it.

The discrepancy was not so bad as the afternoon, but it was bad enough, and Duncan could only account for it on the presumption that Jackson had sold a big block of tickets at cut rates to somebody to dispose of at a profit.

It was a dirty trick, and Duncan determined to call on Jackson and demand an explanation.

On his way home Duncan left the subway at Times Square and started across Forty-second street.

It was then close to midnight, but the vicinity was alive with people.

The theaters had been closed some time before, but the restaurants were ablaze with light and in full swing.

Broadway, Times Square and Forty-second street were bright enough with electric lights for one to read a newspaper.

The cafes or gilded saloons were full of customers, and everywhere night life in New York was running at high pressure.

Two men in evening dress came out of a restaurant and headed for a waiting taxi-cab.

One of them was a well-known politician, the other was the head of an important business concern.

As Duncan stepped on the sidewalk another man, in ordinary clothes, stepped out of a doorway where he had been standing for more than an hour in the shadow.

He walked toward the party of two, and as the politician was in the act of following his friend into the vehicle, he suddenly raised his arm, and Duncan saw the glitter of a revolver barrel.

It was aimed point blank at the politician, and there was no doubt of the fellow's intention.

Duncan saw he couldn't reach the man in time to prevent him from executing his purpose, so he instinctively snatched off his soft crowned hat and flung it at him like a pitcher delivering a swift inshoot.

There was a flash and a whip-like report as the hat struck the man in the face, and the politician staggered and gripped the door of the cab.

In another moment Duncan cleared the intervening space and threw himself on the fellow he had momentarily blinded.

The two went down on the sidewalk and a desperate struggle took place between them.

The revolver, which was a hammerless self-cocker, went off again, and the powder singed the boy's face and hair.

"Blame you, let me go!" cried the man. "Let me go or I'll kill you."

"You've done all the shooting you're going to do," said Duncan, holding down the hand that grasped the weapon and smashing the fellow in the face with his right fist.

The revolver slipped out of his fingers, as the blow dazed him for the moment.

Duncan snatched it up and shoved it against his temple.

"Lie quiet, now, or I'll blow your roof off," he said in a determined tone.

It was a bluff, of course, for the boy had no intention of shooting him, since he felt able to master him as he lay under him, but it was a bluff that no one cares to call under the circumstances.

The man muttered several threats and then subsided, as several passers-by closed around them, ready to aid the plucky lad.

Another crowd surrounded the taxi and the politician, who was wounded in the shoulder, and people were running toward the scene of the shooting from all quarters.

Much excitement naturally prevailed at that prominent part of the Great White Way.

Very few knew exactly what had happened.

These few were the eyewitnesses of the occurrence, and they were three men about town and a newspaper reporter.

A policeman came hurrying up and he relieved Duncan of his prisoner.

"This is the fellow who did the shooting, and here is the gun I took away from him," said the boy to the officer.

A second policeman soon appeared, by which time the crowd has assumed the proportions of a small mob.

Duncan, who had recovered his hat, told what he had seen and explained how he had acted.

A path was cleared to the cab and the prisoner was marched there, accompanied by Duncan.

"Do you know this man?" the wounded politician was asked.

The politician said he did, and mentioned his name.

The policemen having secured all the facts they wanted, which included Duncan's name and address, departed with their prisoner.

"Young man, you probably saved my life," said the politician, whose name was John Mason. "Step into the cab with me."

The driver received his directions and drove to the nearest drug store, at which Mason, his friend and Duncan alighted and entered the store.

All three were taken into the back room, where the politician removed his bullet-perforated dress coat, then his vest, and showed a blood-stained shirt.

On examination the wound was found not to be serious.

The bullet had grazed the shoulder blade and made an ugly-looking furrow.

It was soon scientifically treated and bound up.

"You will find your shoulder stiff and painful for a few days, but with daily treatment at the hands of a doctor the wound will soon heal, though it will leave a permanent scar," said the druggist.

"I'm lucky to have got off so easy," said Mason. "That fellow meant to kill me, and I dare say he would have done so but for the prompt action of this young man. Let me see, your name is—looking at his preserver.

"Duncan Scott."

"Well, my name is John Mason, and I won't forget the service you have rendered me. No man relishes the idea of being made a target for a disgruntled rascal. You showed commendable presence of mind in a sudden emergency. That proves you to be something more than an ordinary person. Not one in five hundred would have acted as you did, and I appreciate the obligation you have placed me under."

"You are welcome, sir. By good luck my hat went true and disconcerted the man's aim. Had it missed him my effort would have gone for nothing," said the boy.

"True, but he might have taken a second shot at me had you not followed up your good work. I see there are powder marks on your forehead, and your hair is singed. The second shot I heard was meant for you, or the revolver went off by accident during the struggle with him. In either case you yourself had a narrow escape, so you incurred quite a risk in my behalf."

"That's one of the chances a person takes in a case of this kind."

Mason then shook hands with Duncan, said he would see him in the police court next morning, and the boy went on to his boarding-house.

Of course, the incident appeared in all the Sunday newspapers, and for the second time within a few days Duncan got into the limelight.

Mason, being prominent in local politics, and a man whose name often figured in the daily press, the story was regarded as more than an ordinary shooting scrape, and considerable space given to it.

The facts leading up to the near-tragedy were duly set forth, and the shooter shown to be a disappointed place seeker who laid his ill luck at Mason's door, and sought revenge to get square.

Doubtless he had counted on making his escape in the excitement attending the affair, and both his purposes had failed owing to the rapid action of Duncan.

The papers did not overlook the fact that the boy was the hero of the auto rescue of a few days previous, and the incident was recalled, demonstrating his nerve and presence of mind in sudden emergencies.

Norma Leslie read the story after eating her breakfast, and it was a surprise to her.

She went over it two or three times to make sure she had missed nothing, and she was much impressed by this second exhibition of Duncan's courage and rapid-fire action under thrilling conditions.

Dick Carter read it later, so also did Tom Shirley, Sam Hickey, manager of the United Film Corporation, and other acquaintances of the hero of the occasion.

Mamie Mulligan was the first to spot it in her flat, and she was soon reading the story to Maud Fuller and Mabel Joyce, and the three were enthused over Duncan's feat.

"Say, girls, he's a peach," said Mamie. "You wouldn't think to look at him that he was capable of doing such great things."

"What do you mean by that, Mamie Mulligan?" flashed Maud. "I call him a fine looking young fellow."

"I didn't say he wasn't; but he's only a boy yet, and boys don't usually distinguish themselves as he has done."

"A boy! I'll bet he's twenty-one. He's got a young look. What do you think, Mabel?"

"I haven't the least idea how old he is," answered Miss Joyce, "but I think he's a very nice young man. Somewhat diffident in company, but probably that was due to the fact it was the first time he had met Mamie and me."

At eleven o'clock Duncan appeared at the police court.

Mason, his friend and other witnesses of the shooting were present.

When the prisoner was called to the bar a cheap lawyer got up and said he had been retained by the accused, and would waive examination.

That cut the proceedings short, and the prisoner was remanded by the magistrate and bail fixed.

This not being forthcoming, he was sent back to the Tombs.

The politician came up to Duncan, shook hands with him and introduced him to several of his friends who were present. He asked the boy what his business was, and Duncan told him that he was the owner of the Savoy Motion Picture Theater uptown.

Mason took note of the fact in his memorandum book, told the boy that he was head of the _____ Department, and invited him to drop in at his office in the County Court-house Building any time he was down in that neighborhood.

Duncan then bade him good-day and started uptown.

CHAPTER IX.

TRYING TO BOOST HIS SHOW.

As Sunday was regarded as the best day at motion picture houses of the class which embraced the Savoy, Duncan felt he would be fully justified in refusing all tickets presented at the door which had not been sold directly at the box office.

It was his opinion that few managers would have stood for them the day before as he had done.

His count after the last show showed he had been done to the tune of \$25, and he felt it was time to call a halt.

It was not the custom for tickets to be sold in advance, either singly or in blocks, even at the full price.

A manager could do it if he wanted to, but Duncan did not know of any of them doing it.

Tickets were always sold from an endless roll right at the window, and that prevented all chance of bogus tickets being worked off on the management.

There was no way of his knowing how many tickets had been disposed of on the outside by Jackson, either as a sharp practice dodge when he knew he was going out of business, or at cut rates to bolster up poor attendance.

In any case, Duncan saw no reason why he should accept them.

He was not responsible for anything in that line Jackson had done.

In selling out, the ex-proprietor had said nothing to him about a bunch of admissions being out, and consequently their agreement did not cover them.

The difficulty of the case was that the people who held these tickets, and had doubtless paid for them in some way, would put up a stiff kick when they were turned down at the door.

As they couldn't get back at Jackson, they would jump on the new manager.

They would probably show their displeasure by staying away from the show altogether, and patronizing the Criterion and Crescent instead.

Since the easiest way is always the best, Duncan decided to accept the tickets at all afternoon shows, and decline to take them on evenings, or on Saturday or Sunday at all.

After leaving the court he hurried up to his theater, got two pieces of cardboard and printed on them in duplicate the sign that covered the ground in his opinion.

By that time his attendants had arrived, and he instructed one of them to hang the signs in conspicuous places in front.

This young man, who presided at the ticket-box, was directed to look at all tickets presented, and refuse those bearing any number which had been issued prior to the reopening of the house.

Duncan then went to dinner at the nearby restaurant.

Fully 300 tickets were turned down during the afternoon.

Many kicks were put up, but when their attention was called to the sign, they subsided, went to the window and paid their money.

Duncan took in \$80 that day, and felt encouraged by the outlook.

Next day the attendance was poor at the afternoon shows,

and half of it was represented by the free tickets that meant no money to Duncan.

The evening shows were not a whole lot better attended, and the total receipts amounted to less than \$20.

Things were just as unsatisfactory on Tuesday.

Investigation showed that the Criterion and Crescent had good audiences on both days—good for the fore part of the week.

Comparing the attendance with Jackson's records, as well as his immediate predecessor, the difference was very noticeable.

A closer inspection of the record showed many erasures and corrections, then Duncan began to suspect that Manager Hickey, of the United Film Corporation, had not made a bad guess when he intimated that the books might have been doctored to cover up the real facts.

"If that is the jinx, it doesn't worry me much," thought the boy manager, "for I'll get busy and try to whoop things up. It seems to me, though, that my predecessors might have done that themselves, and it doesn't account for the sudden closing of the show by each of them. If a theater isn't paying, and the owner wants to get out of it as easy as he can, he would naturally try to find a buyer while it was running, for then his doctored books might deceive an intending purchaser; but when a house shuts right down, with a record of apparent good attendance, it wears a suspicious look. If I've been buncoed, it was because my thoughts were centered on the mysterious jinx, that maybe does not exist, and I did not investigate in the right direction."

Whether he had been buncoed or not, he was in up to his neck, and had to swim out to avoid going in over his head.

Fortunately, he knew he could fall back on Mr. Westbrook if the matter came to a crisis with him, but to a lad of his progressive and ambitious ideas such a reflection carried little comfort.

He had embarked in the enterprise to make his mark through his own exertions alone, and the idea of having to rely on the aid of a friend after getting a start was decidedly repugnant to him.

He expected to repay the money he had accepted as a loan and thus wipe out to a great extent the original obligation.

He was standing outside the theater on Wednesday noon wondering what kind of attendance he would have that afternoon, when he was approached by a man who looked like a prosperous retail merchant.

"Is Mr. Jackson around?" inquired the man in a brisk tone.

"No. That gentleman is no longer connected with this establishment. If you want to see him you may learn something concerning his movements at his flat on Prospect avenue. I understand, however, that he has gone to Chicago. I have the number of the flat, and if you want it I will get it for you."

"Never mind. If he is out of the Savoy I have no business to transact with him. Do you represent the place now?"

"Yes, sir. I am running the house."

"Very good. I have been getting admission tickets to the Savoy from Mr. Jackson in blocks of 250 at two cents each, good for any show, except Sunday. Can I continue the arrangement with you?"

"I should say not, sir," replied Duncan, beginning to see a light in the back ticket business. "May I ask what use you put those tickets to? A lot of them are coming in to me, for which I have received no cash equivalent, and I would be justified in refusing them, but rather than create a troublesome discussion, I am accepting them under the conditions set forth in that notice," and the young manager pointed to it.

The man read it.

"Those conditions are reasonable," he said. "As business has been very poor at this house, Jackson resorted to the scheme of disposing of tickets in blocks to a number of us store-keepers. We give them away to people purchasing twenty-five cents' worth of merchandise and upward. Indeed, one man has been giving out a ticket for every twenty-five cents' worth of goods bought for cash in his store."

"That's a great scheme for you store-keepers if it brings you in trade, but I can't see where it benefits the motion picture house," said Duncan.

"Why, if you are showing to empty seats, it fills them."

"It does—at two cents each, and there is no money in it. When attendance gets so bad that one has to sell seats at two cents, it's time for him to quit, unless he is running a show for philanthropic reasons only."

"Then you don't care to continue the Jackson arrangement?" asked the man.

"No, sir, I do not. I am running this house on legitimate lines. If I can't make it pay that way, I won't paper sixty per cent. of my house, for that is what the Jackson scheme amounts to. I don't think you'd care to conduct your own business on such a plan. It cheapens a business in the eyes of the public. I am giving a good show—better, I believe, than my two rivals—and it costs money to do that. When the people in this neighborhood wake up to what the Savoy is offering them for a nickel, they will not let it get by them."

That closed the interview, and the store-keeper went off.

"Now I understand how those tickets have got around. I don't know how many store-keepers are dispensing them, but one of them has reached the end of his supply, and the others are bound to soon. That will finish the game, and from the size of the crowd I've had Monday and yesterday I guess I'm not losing much through them. I've got to get up some scheme to boom the theater. At present I'm only getting the overflow from the Criterion and Crescent. I must reverse that," said Duncan.

The Savoy did a little better that day, as it ought to have done.

It was the middle of the week and the time for it to pick up.

The attendance as a whole, however, was far from satisfactory.

Thursday showed improved results, but attendance dropped away badly on Friday.

The two-cent tickets were still coming in and Duncan's balance was on the wrong side.

A second store-keeper called to get 250 tickets, at two cents, but he didn't get them.

Duncan put on a corking good bill on Saturday, and had circulars distributed all around the district.

The result was four big houses, and everybody satisfied they had got their money's worth and something over.

More circulars were distributed in the Sunday papers, Duncan arranging with the newsdealers having the largest trade.

This method of publicity was not cheap, but it proved effective, and the Savoy was jammed at the four shows, the young manager taking in a little over \$100.

Duncan learned that for once he had put it over his rivals.

The opposition encountered the worst Sunday business for many weeks.

Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, with few free admissions to accept, the attendance was much better than for the corresponding days of the first week.

"I hope the tide has turned," thought Duncan, after sending out a bunch of boys with circulars to distribute broadcast.

He was up to the theater early, as usual, on Thursday, and was out in the narrow back yard, building a framework on which a painted sign was to be stretched, having received permission, for a small consideration, to place it in a vacant lot for a short time while excavation for a new building was going on, when one of the boys who helped distribute his circulars came through and told him that a lady and gentleman wanted to see him outside.

"All right," said Duncan, not dreaming who his visitors were, "tell them I will be right out."

The boy went back and gave his message to the callers, who were Richard Carter and Norma Leslie.

Duncan drove the last nail and entered the theater through the back door.

Shutting the door he stepped toward the side aisle.

It was a gloomy morning and the room was unusually dark.

He collided with the end seat on the front row and dropped a lead pencil he was carrying in his fingers.

One of his shins was barked by the iron framework of the seat.

"Hang it, why didn't I turn this bulb here on? It's as dark as a dungeon in here this morning," he said.

He reached for the bulb, throwing his weight on one leg. His foot happened to rest on the round pencil.

As though fastened to a roller skate, his foot glided forward and the young manager hit the floor with a whack that shook the room.

The next instant a trap-door communicating with the cellar, which Duncan had never noticed there, dropped, like the trap of a gallows, and Duncan shot through into the depths with a suddenness that took away his breath.

CHAPTER X.

A GRUESOME DISCOVERY.

In the meantime the two visitors were standing in the vestibule entrance of the theater waiting for the young manager to appear.

The minutes slipped by and he came not.

"I wonder who is keeping Duncan so long?" said Carter to Miss Leslie.

The words were hardly out of his mouth when the double entrance doors were suddenly banged open and Duncan dashed out, hatless, and in a state of great excitement.

Carter and the pretty actress were not a little startled by the young manager's precipitate exit from the theater.

Their first impression was that the house was on fire.

"What's the matter, old man?" cried Carter, grabbing the boy by the arm.

"Carter! Miss Leslie!" ejaculated Duncan, stopping and staring at them.

"Sure. The two of us have come up to see you and your motion picture house. But what's wrong, my dear fellow? What has happened? It must be something out of the ordinary to start a chap of your caliber on the run. You haven't unexpectedly run up against that jinx you believed was in possession here, have you?"

"Jinx! Oh, my, it's worse than that," cried Duncan.

"Worse than the jinx? Explain yourself."

"There are three corpses in the cellar."

Miss Leslie uttered a suppressed scream.

"Three corpses!" cried Carter. "How came they to be there? Has a murder been committed on your premises?"

"I don't know how they got there, but they're ghastly looking objects. The sight of them under matchlight gave me an awful turn; and to think I landed right on top of them."

"Landed on top of them! What do you mean?"

"A section of the floor gave way and I fell through."

"The floor of the theater?"

"Yes."

"How much of the floor has fallen in? It's a good thing this didn't happen with an audience in the house, or there'd have been a panic."

"Only a small part of the floor—a trap-door, I guess, that I never noticed was there. I must have shook the fastenings out of place when I slipped and fell while reaching up to turn on one of the electric lights. At any rate, I went through into the cellar so quick that I didn't know what had happened to me. I alighted on something elevated above the floor that broke my fall, or I might have knocked my brains out. There was a crash and the whole business went down with me. Some object fell across me, and it smelt anything but sweet. I pushed it off, scrambled on my feet and struck a match. Then I saw the three corpses lying in a confused heap, and it was evident that one of them was the object which had fallen over me. They had been laid out on a light table, as the wreck of that article testified. I thought I had a pretty good nerve, but that sight seemed to take the starch all out of me. I guess the shaking up I had been treated to unnerved me. You can't imagine what an awful sensation it is to feel yourself falling through space. It was all over in a couple of seconds, but those seconds were the longest I ever put in. Well, I didn't take a second look at those bodies, for seeing an iron ladder running straight upward, I made for it, rushed up as if Old Nick was at my heels, and tumbled out into the theater. Then I put for the sidewalk."

"Upon my word, Duncan, this yarn is something of a thriller," said Carter. "One corpse is bad enough to find on one's premises, but three—how in the name of wonder could they have got in your cellar? The cellar goes with the theater, doesn't it?"

"Yes, but I have no use for it. I never was in it till I fell in just now."

"There must be an entrance to it from the sidewalk."

"There is—a pair of flat iron doors, covering, I suppose, a flight of steps; but they are secured on the under side, and as solid as a rock—braced, I judge. There is another entrance of the same kind in the yard, but the doors are set in a slanting position and secured by a padlock, the key of which is hanging in the box office. The trap-door was probably put there by the grocer, who originally occupied the place before it was turned into a movie, but I never heard of a trap-door opening downward, except on a gallows. They always open upward, otherwise they would be too dangerous to have around. This one is an exception to the rule, and take it from me I'm going to nail it up solid with boards as soon as those bodies have been taken away."

"But if you have the key to the only practicable entrance to the cellar, how could those bodies have got there without your knowledge? Are you sure the key is hanging in your box-office?"

"Yes, I saw it awhile ago when I was in there."

"And you are positive the back entrance is locked?"

"The staple is held by a padlock."

"Have you tried the padlock to see if it is locked?"

"No. I took it for granted that it was from the looks of it."

"We'll go out there and investigate, and then you had better telephone the police."

"Will you step into the box office, Miss Leslie?" said Duncan.

The actress glanced into the dark theater and hesitated.

The knowledge that there were three corpses in the cellar was disquieting to her nerves, even though they were at the back part of the building.

"I think I will remain out here," she said with a weak smile.

"Better come in," said the young manager. "There is a chair in the office. I will light up and make things look more cheerful."

She was persuaded to enter, and Duncan turned on a section of the lights.

Leaving her in the office, Duncan and Carter went to the rear.

The gaping trap-door lay between them and the back exit.

"That's where you went down, is it?" said Carter.

"Yes."

"You had a nasty drop," said the actor, peering down into the black void. "Are the corpses down there?"

"They are. If there was a light you could see them."

"Got a match? Flash it down."

Duncan did so, and the outlines of three tumbled bodies could just be made out below.

"I see them," said Carter. "Well, let's get into the yard."

"Step around the trap and open that door facing you," said Duncan.

The actor did so and walked out into the yard.

An investigation of the cellar door showed that the padlock was fast.

"They never got in that way," said Carter, "unless the key was used. Have you got a lantern?"

"No."

"Well, go to the nearest grocery and buy a couple of candles and we'll take a good look at those dead bodies before we ring up the police. It is rather an awkward situation to have to explain to the authorities—the presence of three dead men in your cellar. They will naturally want to know how they got there. Now, you are the only one who has access to the place, and a trap-door opening downward looks awfully suggestive. They might suspect that you are a modern Sweeny Todd. Heard of him, haven't you?"

"I can't say that I have."

"He was the barber of Fleet street, London. His barber chair was secured to a revolving trap-door in the floor. When a prosperous looking customer came into his shop to be shaved or have his hair cut, and the shop was empty at the time the man seated himself in the chair, Sweeny Todd, after a cautious look through the window, would press a spring concealed under the handle of the chair, whereupon the chair revolved, the piece of flooring coming up as it went down, the customer was dumped into the stone cellar, where his neck was generally broken, and the chair returned to its place empty after making a complete revolution. Then after work was over for the day, Todd descended to the cellar, cleaned out the dead man, and got rid of his body by way of the sewer. Great scheme, wasn't it?"

"Yes; but of course he was caught in the end."

"Sure he was, or the facts wouldn't have come out."

"You think the police might suspect that I dropped these corpses through that trap in order to rob them during the night. That would be a mighty difficult as well as dangerous piece of business to try to put through."

"I don't see how it could be done unless the men were decoyed in here after the show was closed, or before it was opened in the morning. The fact, however, remains that those three corpses are now lying under the trap-door. They couldn't have got there of their own accord. Since you, the proprietor of the place, are not able to throw any light on the subject, it looks as though somebody must have a key fitting your front door, and that this unknown is the cause of those bodies being there."

"This is going to be awkward business for me. The police will take charge of the premises until the coroner has made an investigation, and there'll be no show here to-day. Then the matter will be a sensation for the newspapers, and gracious knows how the public will feel about coming here. It may have a worse effect than the jinx I've been counting on."

"One thing I'd do before I called in the police, and that would be to nail up that trap solid," said Carter. "The next

thing would be to put the bodies somewhere else in the cellar. I'll help you do it. As far as the effect this thing will have on the fortunes of your show I can't say, but the notoriety might have the contrary effect you imagine. The public is inclined toward morbid curiosity. The fact that three corpses were in your cellar under most mysterious circumstances may draw tremendous crowds here to your great profit."

"I hardly think so. It might draw men, but hardly women and children, who are my chief afternoon patrons."

"You can't tell. It's my opinion that the sensation will prove the greatest advertising card you have. However, we are wasting time. Go and get the candles, and fetch the cellar key with you when you come back."

Duncan stopped at the box office on the way out and told Miss Leslie that he and Carter were going to take a good look at the corpses before the police were called in to see whether it was a case of murder, suicide or accidental death.

"Isn't it awful to make such a gruesome discovery in the cellar of your theater just as you are getting started?" said the girl.

"Yes, it's rather awkward for me. I hope it won't have a bad effect on the show. Carter seems to think the sensation will be a big card for me, but I am rather doubtful on that score. It is too bad that your visit here should be spoiled in this way," said Duncan.

"I suppose it can't be helped," she answered with a little smile.

Duncan went to the grocery store, bought two short, fat candles and hurried back to the theater.

Taking the key, he rejoined Carter in the yard.

The cellar door was opened and both flaps thrown back, admitting the air and the gloomy light of the morning.

They went down the stone steps, each with a candle in his hand.

Pausing at the foot of the flight long enough to light the candles and get the wicks burning right, they walked to the spot where the three corpses were tangled up on the floor in the midst of the wreckage of the table.

Holding their candles down, they surveyed the gruesome spectacle.

Suddenly Carter bent down, seized one of the figures and yanked its white, waxen face into the full glare of the light.

"Ha, ha, ha!" he roared. "Well, if this isn't the best joke of the year. Why, these corpses of yours are only dummies—wax figures. Ha, ha, ha! What a sell! But I dare say they looked real enough under the conditions you discovered them. They are precious life-like—I mean death-like. The chap who fashioned them was an artist at the business. I suppose they've been here for some time. Probably one of the former owners of the theater brought them here for some purpose, and abandoned them when he sold out. Maybe this is the jinx that frightened the other owners into selling out quick. They found them laid out on the table, took them for murdered men, and were afraid to notify the police lest their inability to explain their presence in the cellar might get them into all kinds of trouble. It doesn't take a whole lot to rattle some men."

"There might be something in that," said the greatly relieved Duncan. "That would account for Jackson declining to tell me what the hoodoo was, and explain why he has gone to Chicago. I heard yesterday that his wife is selling out the contents of their flat, so I suppose she is about to follow him there."

"It is only a surmise on my part, of course. If it was Benson, the original owner of this theater, who fetched the dummies here and left them when he sold out, it hardly seems reasonable that his four successors should all be scared into selling through the fact of finding them here if they were doing good business."

"I don't believe they were doing good business," said Duncan. "It is now my opinion that the Savoy, for some reason, hasn't caught on at any stage of its existence. The only days I've done a paying business since I opened up have been Saturday and Sunday, and I had to help things along myself by showering the district with circulars. This is the nicest little house in the city of its class, but the people in this neighborhood have got to be pulled in to make them realize it. If these wax figures represent the supposed jinx, then I've got one obstacle off my hands, and all I have to do to make a success is to get the people to come here week days in numbers sufficient to make a profit."

"That's right," said Carter. "Now let's fix that trap and then rejoin Miss Leslie and relieve her mind about the corpses."

When Duncan and Carter started to remove the wax figures and the wreck of the light table so as to make room for a packing case in order to stand on to nail up the trap, they found a combination of wires attached to both the figures and the top of the table, which was intact.

The wires ran over small pulleys set in the ceiling and in the floor, and the ends continued on toward the front of the building.

"Hello, there was something intended here," said Carter.

"That seems pretty clear. I guess that table was fixed to rise up through the trap with the figures on it, though what the object of such a device was I can't imagine. It's a wreck now, so we are not likely to find out the meaning of it. We'll lift the figures back here for the present so as to get the packing case under the trap. I'll detach them from the wires later on."

That was done and the packing case placed in position.

Duncan got the hammer and nails, and some pieces of board, and mounted the case, while Carter held up both candles.

The young manager found that the trap was intended to be held by a stout bolt, to the end of which was attached a wire which ran to a pulley, and thence toward the front of the building.

Slamming up the trap-door, the bolt caught and held firm of itself.

Duncan saw that in some way the shock of his fall upon the trap had caused the bolt to slip.

To make matters sure, he nailed a piece of board under each end of the trap-door, and that put it entirely out of business.

Then he and Carter returned to Miss Leslie, who was nervously awaiting them.

CHAPTER XI.

BUM BUSINESS.

"Would you like to go into the cellar and view the three corpses, Miss Leslie?" asked Duncan, with a demure expression, while Carter turned his face away to hide a broad grin.

"Me!" cried the young actress, with a horrified look. "I should think not. I wouldn't look at them for a thousand dollars."

"They would interest you, I think," said the young manager.

"I think you are real mean to suggest such a thing," said Norma.

"Carter and I will go with you."

"But I don't care to go," she said, firmly.

"We will protect you."

"Now, Mr. Scott, if you persist I shall be real angry with you."

"Well, I wouldn't like you to be angry with me, so I'll tell you that this business is one on me."

"What do you mean?"

"There are no corpses at all in the cellar."

"No? But you said—"

"That's where the joke comes in on me. I took the figures for corpses. They are only three wax dummies."

"Is that really so?" said the girl, with a look of relief.

"It is really so," said Duncan, who then made a full explanation of the investigation made by him and Carter.

"I'm sorry, Duncan, but the story is too good to keep. I shall have to pass it around," said Carter. "When Mamie Mulligan hears about it she'll throw a fit. You'd better not call there again for awhile. I wouldn't be surprised if this thing gets into the newspapers."

"Do you think that's the jinx you told me about?" said Miss Leslie.

"I'm beginning to believe it is," replied Duncan.

"It's a harmless one, then," smiled Norma.

"It gave me quite a turn just the same. I'm ashamed of my want of nerve."

"You have nerve enough, Mr. Scott, you have already demonstrated that fact. I don't blame you for getting rattled over three figures that looked to you like corpses down in the dark cellar. If such a thing had happened to me I should have died with fright then and there," said the young actress.

"Well, now, good people, look my show over, and then do me the honor of going to lunch with me," said Duncan, gaily.

"Lunch!" exclaimed Carter. "Methinks that hath a pleasant sound. I have not the heart to refuse such an invitation. Lead on and we will look your establishment over."

They found the Savoy much to their liking, and congratulated the boy on its acquisition.

"This ought to prove a gold mine to you. All you have to

do is to cram 500 people in here at every show and success is yours," said Carter.

"That's going the limit, and I don't know of any show doing it right along," said Duncan. "The combined capacity of my rivals is 800. I had 500 at each show Sunday night, and that hit the Criterion and Crescent kind of bad, I've heard."

"What do you care? You're out for everything in sight, and a sentimental sympathy for one's competitors is out of date these days, if it ever existed," said the actor.

Duncan's attaches now turned up ready for business, and the young manager took his visitors to the restaurant and treated them to dinner.

At the end of the meal they went downtown and Duncan returned to his show.

A fair audience attended the afternoon shows, and the same might be said of the evening ones.

Next morning Duncan visited the cellar again, and tried to figure out what the figures, the table and the trap was intended to accomplish, but he could not fathom the puzzle.

He followed the wires and found they ran up into the box office.

A subsequent examination of the office showed a bunch of wires alongside of the electric "governor."

They were all tied together, and indicated that whatever the scheme was it had never been in working order.

The wires ran to the arms and legs of the figures, and were concealed by their clothes.

A wire was attached to the under part of each of the four corners of the table.

Each of these wires ran over a small pulley in the ceiling, close to the trap, down to similar pulleys set in the floor beneath, thence to a thicker wire with which they were combined, which ran under a pulley some yards away, up to a pulley in the ceiling, and so on over other pulleys to the box office.

The whole thing was ingenious enough to excite Duncan's curiosity to quite a pitch, but it required explanation, which was not forthcoming.

After a thorough inspection the boy was convinced that the apparatus was unfinished when abandoned.

His fall and collision with the table and figures had broken several of the wires, but had not hurt the dummies at all.

He detached them from the wires and laid them aside, thinking he might be able to dispose of them to some showman using such things.

Then he tacked the sign on the wooden framework he had been making when called to the front of the house to meet Carter and Miss Leslie, carried it to the vacant lot where work had not yet commenced, and placed it where it would not interfere with the digging that was about to begin.

As it was a corner lot it was in sight of many thousand people every day, and was likely to prove a great advertisement for his theater.

The sign read as follows:

"Motion Picture Plays—The Best at 'The Savoy,' No. — Blank Avenue. Commodious, handsome, safe. Four shows daily—Afternoons, 1 and 3; Evenings, 7 and 9. Admission, Five Cents."

That day was another poor one, but not as bad as the previous Friday.

Only an occasional free admission turned up now, the supply having been exhausted and made use of, and their presence in the box was only detected when the count was made and compared with the receipts.

Duncan covered the district with more advertising, and pulled good crowds on Saturday and Sunday, which affected the attendance at the Criterion and Crescent.

He had been running two weeks now, and nothing had happened except the incident of the cellar.

The joke had circulated around the studios and the Rialto, and among Duncan's friends, but he was so busy that no one had the chance to chaff him about it.

Spencer and Stacey both met him two or three times and asked him when he was going to close up.

"When it snows on the Fourth of July," replied the young manager.

"Why, you're not doing anything to speak of except Saturday and Sunday," said Spencer.

"It takes time for the Savoy to get a gait on after its numerous closings."

"Bah! This neighborhood won't support three houses."

"You ought to know, for you've been here longer than I have. If you are sure that your statement is correct, you and Stacey had better toss up to see which of you will quit."

"You're the one who will have to quit. We are established."

"I'm not going to quit. Paste that fact in your hat."

"We'll see, young man, we'll see. This is Monday, and you haven't got a corporal's guard in your house. I'll give you two weeks more at the outside," and Spencer walked away.

It proved to be one of the worst days of his management, and Duncan couldn't understand it, with the attractions he offered.

The Criterion and Crescent drew their usual half house for that day.

Next morning while seated in the box-office thinking up a scheme to increase the week-day attendance, two young men appeared outside, and one, after looking in, tapped on the glass.

Duncan stepped outside and found Murphy and Fogg, the "Spinning Whirligigs."

"Hello, Scott," said Murphy, "Mamie Mulligan sent us up here."

"What for?" asked Duncan.

"We're not working, and she thought you might give us a chance."

"To do your turn?"

"Yes. We'll go on for a week cheap. We're down to bed rock."

"I haven't any stage. I'm only giving motion pictures."

"Mamie thought you were putting on an act or two."

"I don't know where she got the impression from."

"That's tough luck. We spent our last nickel coming up here."

"Well, I'll give you carfare to take you back."

"Can't you stake us to a meal each?"

"Yes, I'll do that. How is it you're out of work? I thought you said your act knocked the people cold."

"It did," grinned Fogg. "There was such a frost while we were on that the managers cut us out of the bill."

"You fellows ought to confine yourselves to summer parks when the thermometer is way up, and perhaps you'd be appreciated."

"The Spinning Whirligigs look well on the bill. Our act ought to take," said Murphy.

"The name is all right, but people don't go to see the name."

"How's business with you?" asked Fogg.

"Nothing to brag of during the week. I'm looking for it to pick up."

"Why don't you put a stage in and give some vaudeville?"

"No room for a stage, and the receipts would hardly stand a performers' salary list, after deducting the overhead expense."

"It wouldn't cost you much to take us on—twenty per for the team—about eighty cents for each time we went on—forty cents apiece. We furnish everything," said Murphy.

"Cheap enough if you could draw at all."

"Draw! Say, we'd pull 'em in. We'd crowd the house so the people would think they were in a subway car during rush hours. Wouldn't we, Jimmy?"

"Bet your suspenders we would," grinned Fogg.

"Here's half a dollar for you. Now run along. I'm busy," said the young manager, and the "Spinning Whirligigs" vanished, but they might have been seen in the corner saloon putting themselves outside a couple of beers and sampling the free lunch.

CHAPTER XII.

THE BLIND SINGER.

Business continued rocky all the week, and when Duncan saw Carter again he looked kind of blue.

The second month's rent would be due in another week, and so would the light bill.

His running expenses had already eaten up his receipts, and he was behind, too.

He had written to Mr. Westbrook a short letter saying that the show had got such a black eye from his predecessors that he was finding his work cut out for him, but he hoped to come out all right in the end.

"So business is rotten, is it?" said Carter.

"Frankly it is, except Saturday and Sunday," admitted Duncan.

"What are you putting on to-morrow?"

Duncan told him.

"Miss Leslie and I are in the 'Moonshiners.' That little girl will do anything for you, Duncan. Do you know she split with Maud Fuller on your account?"

"How so?" said Duncan, much astonished.

"She was jealous because Maud made up to you. I confess

I didn't like it myself, for Maud is my particular divinity. I wasn't jealous, though, because I saw you didn't encourage her, and I believe you think a lot of Miss Leslie."

"Well, what are you getting at?"

"This. Miss Leslie and I will not be busy to-morrow, nor the rest of the week. Get out announcements right away that Richard Carter and Norma Leslie, the principals of the three-reel story 'The Moonshiners' on the bill to-morrow, will appear before the audience at the close of the pictures in street attire, and see what the effect will be," said Carter.

"By George, that's a good idea. I'll do it. You two are in the pictures nearly every day; you've been applauded as though you were right there in person. I'll bet I'll pull a house."

"You can announce us for the rest of the week if we are in one of the stories. I'll call on Miss Leslie with you and put it up to her. I know she'll agree to oblige you. She's always talking about you at the studio. She thinks you are the candy, take that from me. You made a ten-strike with her when you saved that little girl from the auto, and you caught Maud, too, but with her it was only a passing fancy. It's different with Miss Leslie. If you like her well enough to want to annex her for good by and by, there is nothing to stop you that I know of," said Carter.

"Between you, I and the post, Carter, I'd give a whole lot to win her," said Duncan, earnestly, "but I'm afraid some luckier chap than me will get her."

"Not if you work the wires right. She isn't one to fall into your arms even if you've got a hold on her heart. You'll have to chase her. She doesn't believe in a girl holding herself cheap. As a rule a girl is only won once, and she thinks that the fellow who gets the right to pay her bills ought to have a run for his money."

By that time they had reached Miss Leslie's boarding-house, and they found her in.

She was delighted to see Duncan, and was sorry he could only pay her a brief visit.

Carter mentioned the object of their visit, and the young actress fell right in with the plan.

"I told him you'd consent to try and give him a lift," said Carter. "He needs it, for he's on the rocks, and something has to be done to fill his house."

Duncan hurried uptown and got out the announcements.

He left a hurry order for circulars with the printer, intending to have them distributed in the morning.

He painted two signs to be hung outside, and then put them outside that afternoon.

Next day was Tuesday, and heretofore he had poor houses. Not so that day.

When the first show opened the Savoy was crowded with women and children, while the Criterion and the Crescent opened to empty benches.

Spencer and Stacey were in a funk.

It was the worst house they had had in over a year, and they didn't know what it meant until word was carried to them that the Savoy was jammed.

"What in the name of Goshen is the attraction?" cried Spencer.

He was told.

He gnashed his false teeth and swore at the fickleness of his patrons.

His second show was no better.

His evening houses were also light.

Carter and Miss Leslie kept their word and made their bow before the crowd at each of the shows that day.

Duncan took in \$100 instead of \$15 or \$20, and was as happy as a clam at high water.

He dined his two good friends and told them he would never forget their kindness.

"We'll be on hand again to-morrow," said Carter.

And they were, and big houses greeted them, while Duncan's competitors showed to almost empty benches.

New cards were displayed outside the Savoy, which told the public to "Get the habit and come to 'The Savoy.' Miss Norma Leslie and Mr. Richard Carter will positively appear at every show this week."

The people seemed to be getting the habit, for they filled the seats at the pretty theater on Thursday and Friday, and jammed the house on Saturday and Sunday.

On the following week, without the presence of the two professional favorites, Duncan had good houses, and now seemed likely to divide the patronage with his two rivals, which meant that he would get a little more than either.

This was his fifth week, and his regime as manager had now outlasted that of any one of the previous five owners.

But he knew he must keep things humming to prevent a falling off.

Spencer felt that he must get busy, and so he engaged the leading man of a rival studio to meet his audiences, and announced the fact broadcast.

The people ran to his house and deserted the Savoy and the Crescent.

His houses were big, but he had a scrap with Stacey over it.

His friendly rival thought he shouldn't do anything to materially hurt the Crescent.

"Competition is the life of trade," grinned Spencer, rubbing his hands. "Go and hire some actor yourself. I'm not stopping you."

Stacey did so, and hired a leading lady for several days on the following week.

She could only present herself of evenings, however, but she pulled houses to Stacey's satisfaction, and the Criterion and the Savoy suffered a falling away.

Then Miss Leslie came up evenings for Duncan, and everybody flocked back to his theater.

The situation was resolving itself into a three-cornered fight, for Spencer and Stacey didn't speak.

This was all the better for Duncan.

It was about this time that Duncan made a bull's-eye shot, and quite accidentally.

He received a note from a friend who had moved to the Bronx, telling he was sick and asking him to call.

Leaving his show in charge of Carter one evening, he ran up there.

After spending an hour with his friend he started back.

As he was passing a German beer saloon and garden, he heard the notes of a violin accompanying one of the sweetest voices he had ever listened to.

He couldn't resist the temptation to enter and see who was singing.

It was a girl of about fifteen, and her face was almost seraphic in its loveliness, but there was something about it that arrested Duncan's attention even more than her beauty—something strange and pathetic.

Her companion was a boy of thirteen or thereabouts.

He was playing the violin with much expression, and in a way that just filled in with the girl's voice.

They were rather poorly clad, although their clothes were neat and clean.

When the song was finished, the boy took off his cap and went around among the men present collecting coppers and nickels from those who were liberal enough to contribute.

Duncan felt that what he had heard was worth a dime, and he dropped it into the cap.

"Thank you, sir," said the boy, respectfully.

The girl stood in the spot where she had been singing looking straight ahead, with so peculiar an expression that Duncan was struck by it.

A man somewhat under the influence of liquor left the bar and approached her.

She did not move to avoid him until he came closer, and then she drew back.

He stopped and looked at her.

"You're a blamed party gal. Blame me if I don't give yer a kiss," he said.

The girl shrank back with a look of alarm, and, putting out her hands in a strange way, began to feel the air like a blind person.

The man made a grab at her, but the boy interfered.

"Leave my sister alone," he said.

"Eh? What's the matter with yer. I'm only goin' to kiss her."

"You sha'n't touch her," cried the boy, getting between them.

"Sha'n't, eh? Get out of my way, yer little monkey."

He gave the boy a backhanded slap in the face that sent him spinning against the wall.

Then he seized the girl and drew her toward him.

She uttered a thrilling scream.

Several men half started up to interfere, but seemed afraid of the ruffian.

Not so Duncan.

With a bound he reached the man's side.

"Let go of her, you big loafer!" he cried.

With an imprecation the man made a lunge at him with his left arm.

Duncan dodged the blow and struck the fellow a staggering blow in the jaw.

Taking advantage of the change he tore the girl away from the man's grasp and swung her around behind him.

"Look out! He's got a gun!" shouted one of those present, and immediately the spectators rose from their seats and began to scatter.

The men at the bar started for the door.

The half-drunken ruffian had drawn a revolver and was trying to cock it.

The young manager saw his danger.

He knew his only chance was to take the bull by the horns. He sprang at the man, grabbed the wrist of the hand that held the weapon and shot his fist again at the man's jaw.

The fellow saw the blow coming and tried to dodge.

Duncan's fist instead of reaching his chin, as the boy intended, landed with crushing force on his nose, and the blood spurted.

"You infernal whelp, I'll kill you for that!" roared the scoundrel, swinging his arm around in spite of Duncan's grip and firing.

The bullet missed the boy's head by a hair, and the flash almost blinded him.

He aroused all his energies, and for the third time he struck out with all the force he was capable of.

The blow took effect on the point of the fellow's chin, his head went back with a snap, and he dropped—knocked clean out.

CHAPTER XIII.

CONCLUSION.

Duncan stooped and picked up the revolver.

Shoving it in his pocket, he took the frightened girl by the arm, while her brother held her by the other and led her out of the saloon.

"Don't be frightened, miss," he said, reassuringly. "You are safe now. I will see you both down the street a bit."

"Brother, where are you?" said the girl, in fluttering accents.

"Here, Ruby."

"Who is this—"

"He's a big boy, and he saved you from that man. The fellow knocked me against the wall."

"How can I thank you, sir," cried the girl, turning her face toward Duncan, but the strange expression in her eyes showed she did not see him—that she was blind. "You saved me from harm, from insult, and I am so grateful to you—I cannot tell you how much."

"That's all right," replied Duncan, cheerfully, though he felt sad to know that the girl was so terribly afflicted. I only did the right thing. I punished the scoundrel, though I didn't give him half he deserved."

"He might have shot you," faltered the lovely creature.

"Well, if he had done so I would have suffered in a righteous cause."

"But it would have been terrible."

"As it didn't happen, don't worry about it."

"I shall never forget what you have done for me. What is your name?"

Duncan told her.

"And what is yours?" he said.

"Ruby Rand. My brother's name is Robert."

"Are you orphans and out in the world that you are trying to earn a living singing in saloons?"

"Yes," she said, sadly. "Our mother died a few months ago, and now we have only each other, and our home is a poor garret of two rooms on the east side of the Bronx."

"You have a sweet voice. I am sure you could use it to better advantage than you are doing."

"Oh, I wish I could. We barely earn enough to pay our way, and were either of us taken sick, I know not what would become of us."

"Suppose you let me help you both?"

"If you will we will be deeply grateful to you."

"I own a moving picture theater on Blank avenue. If you will consent to sing there at four shows a day, your brother accompanying you on the violin, I will give you a small salary, which I will increase if you are a success."

"We'll do it," said the lad, promptly. "When do you want us?"

"Right away. To-morrow."

"Give me the address, and when we are to come, and we will be there."

"Here is my card. Can I depend on you?"

"You certainly can."

"Then be on hand at two in the afternoon. If you score a hit of any kind you had better move over near the theater. I

will see that you get respectable quarters for yourself and your brother."

And so they parted for the night, the brother and sister going toward their humble lodgings full of joy at the chance which seemed to be theirs, while Duncan believed he had secured an attraction within his means that would draw the people.

Dame Fortune had brought those three together for a purpose that meant much on both sides.

Next morning, in addition to the regular motion picture bills was another announcing the appearance of a headline attraction in the person of Miss Ruby Rand, the sweetest singer in vaudeville, so Duncan put it.

Promptly at two the blind girl and her brother appeared, and Duncan was waiting for them outside.

He had provided a handsome gown for the girl, and a brown velvet suit for her brother.

He took them upstairs to a flat where he had arranged to have them change their clothes.

At half-past two, when the three-reel subject was done, he led the girl to the piano and introduced her to the small audience present.

Then the boy began the introductory, and presently the girl's voice was filling the room with the voice of an angel.

The applause was great, what it lacked in volume being made up in sincerity.

Ruby sang a second song as an encore, and was applauded again.

Then Duncan led them out to the little box office, where they remained till called to perform before the second show.

A larger audience greeted them this time, for people had talked, and the girl's voice had reached the street and held a crowd there.

The singer received an enthusiastic reception, and Duncan had to turn down a second encore.

Another crowd gathered outside, and a policeman coming along had to clear them away.

Duncan took brother and sister to the restaurant, and they had supper with him, the finest meal they had had for a long time, they thought.

"You have made a hit," said Duncan, "and I will engage you indefinitely at," here he mentioned the amount, which they thought was munificent.

"It is more than we expected," said her brother. "We will work for you as long as you want us to."

"To-morrow you must come around early and we will look around for a small flat for you. Something cheap until you get more money. It will not do for you to go over to the Bronx late at night. This evening I will put you on at the beginning of the second show, so you can get away soon after nine."

The news of the wonderful singer at the Savoy was spread all around the district with astonishing celerity.

Curiosity was aroused and a full house was present at seven. Ruby was greeted with applause before she opened her mouth, and her first song was received with thunders of applause.

Her second received an ovation.

Spencer and Stacey both heard about her, and the furore she had aroused.

How in thunder could the boy manager of the Savoy afford to hire such an attraction, which struck them from all reports as a high-priced vaudeville artist.

He couldn't stand it for many days, they were sure.

Next morning Duncan found a three-room flat for the Rands, and they moved in the day after, but Ruby drew four packed audiences that afternoon and evening, people being turned away at each show, while the Criterion and Crescent were almost deserted.

Every day was Sunday now with Duncan, and he was in high glee over the change in his luck.

He sent word to Carter and Miss Leslie, and they came up to hear the singer.

"By George, that girl's a wonder! Where in thunder did you get her, and how can you afford to pay her salary?" asked Carter.

"What do you think she's worth?" asked Duncan.

"I'll bet Zammerstein or any other first-class vaudeville manager would give her \$1,500 a week; perhaps more. This is no place for such a voice. How did you get her?"

"That's a secret. She is under indefinite contract with me," said Duncan.

"Indefinite! Say, don't give me such a steer, old man. Why, she would draw in any big house downtown."

"Carter, have you noticed she is blind?"

"Blind? Great Scott, no. You don't mean that."

"I do. Wait a moment, I'll introduce you and Miss Leslie." Duncan went into the box office and brought Ruby out and introduced her to Miss Leslie and Carter.

Then they saw she was blind, but her loveliness deeply impressed them both.

That night the actress hardly slept.

She saw in the blind girl a rival for Duncan's heart.

She had no foundation on which to build her fears, but something warned her that it was to be a fight between them, and she feared the result.

Full houses was the rule now at the Savoy, and only the overflow went to the Criterion and the Crescent.

The girl's fame filtered downtown, the newspapers heard of her, and her picture with a story given out by Duncan appeared in several of the papers.

Then came agents one after another from theatrical agencies and from the big vaudeville managers offering her a salary that fairly dazzled her.

But no temptation would win her from Duncan.

Then the agents swarmed around him to secure her.

"I'll pay you \$500 a week for two weeks," said one.

Another offered \$1,000 a week for twelve weeks.

A prominent vaudeville firm offered to take her on their circuit at \$1,500.

Duncan could have made a fortune by letting the girl out with her brother.

But he turned the offers down.

Ruby was a hot-house flower that could not be exploited like others.

He had constituted himself her big brother, and she had come to look upon him as second only to her own brother.

And so Ruby wasted her sweetness on the cheap audiences, but she now only appeared at the evening shows, except on Saturday and Sunday.

One day Spencer came to Duncan.

"Want to buy me out? I'll sell cheap. I want to get out of this infernal neighborhood and look after my other show downtown."

"No," said Duncan, "maybe your friend Stacey will accommodate you."

"Stacey be jiggered. He's got his hands full trying to keep his own joint going. You've knocked the ground from under us both with that blind girl. Who is she, anyway?"

"My mascot," said Duncan. "I told you that the Savoy would hit its gait some time, and that when it did the Criterion and the Crescent would get only what I couldn't accommodate. You see I was right, don't you? Well, I've hired the store next door, and will put in 200 more seats. I'm going to knock out my back wall and build a stage in the yard. I am angling for the store on the other side. If I get it I'll have a seating capacity of 800 when the alterations have been made."

"You can't knock out the wall. It's against the law."

"I have seen Mr. John Mason, head of the Department. He has told me that I can have anything that I want within reason that he can assure me. What he says goes in the Department. He'll make it all right with any outside influence."

"Hang it! You'll own this district."

"I expect to. I told you the Savoy would run it some day. I could put a violation on both your shows, for they do not fully comply with the law. On the whole, I think you chaps are too close to the Savoy to make money as soon as I get my stage in and the house is enlarged. You'd better sell and go while the walking is good."

Two weeks later Duncan bought Spencer's seats at auction price.

A week later still he bought Stacey out altogether and closed down the Savoy pending repairs.

In due course the Savoy reopened with moving pictures, a vaudeville skit and Ruby Rand billed larger than ever.

He had 800 seats, with standing room for 150 more, and he did a land office business.

Did Duncan win Norma Leslie, or did he have a change of heart and marry his lovely blind mascot?

Figure it out yourself.

All I will say is that he made his mark running a moving picture show.

Next week's issue will contain "ED, THE OFFICE BOY; OR, THE LAD BEHIND THE DEALS." (A Wall Street Story.)

SEND POSTAL FOR OUR FREE CATALOGUE.

CURRENT NEWS

Pat Milam, aged ten, who is with his father, A. L. Milam of Worthington, Ind., on an outing in the north, caught a maskinonge weighing five and one-half pounds and measuring more than twenty-eight inches in length, which he sent home to his mother by express.

In many parts of Lancashire and Yorkshire shoes for the working classes of both sexes are sold with heavy, square hobnails, whose clatter in the street in the morning as the wearers go to work is almost intolerable. The men's shoes have a curious spade-like prolongation at the toe.

Maurice Sanders, of No. 4053 Kenmore avenue, Chicago, lost a diamond horseshoe tie pin at night on his way home and could find no trace of it. Five days later Alice, the eight-year-old daughter, came home crying. She was expected from the grocery with some provisions and 25 cents in change. "The quarter fell out of my hand and rolled in the grass," she said. "I lost it. I looked all over. I couldn't find the quarter, but I found this old pin in the grass." It was her father's diamond horseshoe.

While dressing for luncheon at Atlantic City, Mrs. Joseph Kerney, of No. 143 Orchard street, Pittsburgh, gave her four-year-old son her jewel case to play with. It contained \$3,000 worth of diamonds and \$300 in money. The little boy walked down the stairs to the main corridor of the hotel, where his mother found him later with the case in his hands. But the diamonds and money were gone. The child said two young women looked in the case and gave him a quarter. Ella Clark and Harriet Slater, parlor maids in the hotel, were arrested, but later were released.

President Wilson has directed the restoration to entry of 908,000 acres of lands in Fremont, Bonneville, and Bingham Counties, Idaho. The lands were withdrawn from entry as coal lands. Part of the area is included in phosphate reserves and national forests, but not in power site or petroleum reserves. In Wyoming restoration to entry is made of 305,000 acres originally withdrawn as valuable for phosphate deposits. Most of the lands lie within the Teton palisade and Wyoming national forests. The president has withdrawn from settlement 2,880 acres within the Nez Perce national forest of Idaho for power-site purposes.

The new self-righting flying apparatus, invented by Lieutenant J. W. Dunne, a retired British army officer, underwent most successful trials for the French army on the aerodrome at Villacoublay, in the presence of Brigadier General Auguste E. Hirschauer, Commander of the French military aerial corps. Major Julien Felix, a French army aviator, was the pilot. He ascended in a high, gusty wind, considered by the other aviators present too strong to be faced. The apparatus displayed a degree of stability

which drew expressions of amazement from all the expert witnesses. From time to time Major Felix removed his hands from the levers and held them above his head to show the automatic equilibrium of the machine, which retained a perfect level even when it encountered eddies, air pockets or squalls. The aeroplane is a biplane, shaped something like an open-winged sparrow or the letter "V." It has no tail.

A vigorous protest has been submitted to the Secretary of State by the governments of Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, Panama and England, the latter on behalf of Jamaica, against the passage by Congress of that portion of the Underwood tariff bill imposing a duty of one-tenth of 1 cent a pound on bananas. Bananas form the principal export of those countries, and the governments object to a tax, the burden of which, they claim, would be shifted on the native producers, who even under present conditions with the low prices bananas bring in this country have difficulty in making any profit. It is also pointed out that the imposition of this tax would divert the banana trade to Europe, where the producer would not be burdened by the tax. This would mean, they say, that the banana boats on their return trips from Europe would carry back to Latin-America European goods and merchandise. It also would mean, it is declared, the diversion of much trade and commerce from the United States to Europe, and the loss to American merchants and manufacturers of the large and rapidly increasing export trade to the countries named.

That there are large numbers of various species of clams, oysters, crabs and shrimps lying in the waters of Yakuina Bay, Oregon, and in its bordering mud flats, is the conclusion reached by George F. Sykes, professor of zoology at the Oregon Agricultural College, who is engaged in taking a census of the shell-fish in the Newport region. Seven different species have been identified by Prof. Sykes and his assistants, as follows: the soft-shelled clam of Rhode Island, the cockle, the little hard shell, the native bentnose, the large butter clam, the American mud clam and the razor clam of the beach. The most abundant of these, says Prof. Sykes, is the so-called Eastern clam. It is also by far the most valuable commercially, although the others find a ready market. Oysters were found growing far down the lower bay as well as in the Oysterville region, where most of the natural and cultivated beds are found. No attempt has been made by Prof. Sykes to ascertain the kinds and quantities of shrimps and crabs, but he says the bay and its shores promise to become prolific grounds for the production of edible shellfish. A year ago a preliminary survey of the bay was made and twenty or more species of marketable food fish were found, the most important of which are the chinook and silverside salmon, ling, cod and black, red and orange rockfish, hake, herring and tomcod, starry flounder, kelp, perch and halibut.

HAND IN HAND

—OR—

THE LUCKY LEGION

By GASTON GARNE

(A SERIAL STORY)

CHAPTER XVII (continued).

Myrtle was very pale and trembling violently as they went back into the ball room. As Roger left her with her brother and others of her friends, she said in a low and earnest voice:

"I beg of you to beware of that Smith. He means to do you harm."

Roger, thrilled to the core, replied:

"Thank you for such kind interest. I will heed your warning."

Then Fred Fair came along, and Roger soon took the opportunity to tell him all.

Fred's face was aflame.

"The vile scoundrel!" he exclaimed. "He needs a pummeling. Don't be afraid of him, Roger. We will all stand back of you."

"Afraid!" said Roger, contemptuously. "I can only tell you that I will make him retract that insult."

"Bravo! But you must look out for foul play. Don't seek a conflict with him, but if it must come, stand up like a man."

"Never fear that."

"I don't. But, by the way, how does he dare come here to-night? He is under suspension from the club. I will see the president, and he shall be expelled."

But Alden had already heard the story from his sister. He came up with flashing eyes.

"I know all about it," he said. "Where is that puppy, Smith? He shall be given his walking papers."

But Smith was not in the hall, nor to be found anywhere about. The dance went on, but Myrtle and her friends went home early. The young girl had evidently been much upset by Smith's ruffianly conduct.

After twelve o'clock had struck Roger and Fred prepared to leave. There were many who would dance two hours yet, but Roger had a surfeit and Fred the same.

Fred had sent his fiancee home in his father's carriage with her sisters and others, there not being room enough for him. So it happened that he remained to accompany Roger, which was partly design on his part.

As they left the hall a seedy-looking man ran forward and handed Roger a note. Thus it read:

"ROGER BENTON.—If you are a man of courage and honor you will meet me at one o'clock, or after the dance, on the college campus. I will bring a friend, and you may do the same, and will give you all the satisfaction you de-

serve. If you do not show up I shall know that you are a poltroon and a low-born outcast. Yours,
"JAMES SMITH."

Roger handed this to Fred. The latter read it and crumpled it in his hand.

"Come on, Roger," he gritted. "If you don't lick the cuss I will."

Roger made no reply, but with his friend started for the place of appointment. But before they had gone a dozen yards Fred stopped:

"Hold on!" he exclaimed. "This won't do!"

"Why not?" asked Roger.

"We ought to know Jim Smith by this time. He will not meet you in any fair fight, you may be sure. How do we know but what he is laying a trap to have a gang set upon us and do us."

"It would be like him," said Roger. "But how can we spoil his game?"

"Meet plot with counter-plot," said Fred. "We'll have a gang conveniently within call also. I'll go back and see Harold Mayne and Alden. They'll find plenty of the boys ready to come along behind us. Wait here."

And away dashed Fred. It was some time before he returned. Then he said:

"It's all right. They're coming and will be within call. Come along!"

CHAPTER XVIII.

AN AFFAIR OF HONOR.

Away Fred and Roger went toward the college campus. Fear did not once enter Roger's breast. He was resolute and determined to hold his end up.

He was always averse to fighting and had often held his temper when there had been ample provocation for giving an offending party a thrashing. But in this case he felt a certain kind of justification.

If he quailed before Smith now there would be no end of petty persecutions to follow, for the young bully would consider his rival afraid of him. There was no course open for Roger, but to assert his manhood in a fair defense of his honor.

Such a method of settling disputes was common in most

schools. The matter of fisticuffs did not always decide the question for the right, but it at least enabled the participants to gain mutual satisfaction.

Roger was not sure of besting Smith. The latter was an expert boxer and very strong. He had sparred with Ike Shaw, who was a professional featherweight prize-fighter, and Shaw was bound to yield him respect. But Roger was strong and hardy and could stand punishment well. Unless knocked out in the beginning he could probably outlast Smith.

Rapidly the two youths drew near the campus.

There was a little dell behind some evergreen trees where the moon made all nearly as light as day. Many a youthful school quarrel had been settled here.

As Roger and Fred drew near the spot they saw two dark forms standing in the center of this space. A harsh voice said:

"You decided to come, eh? Well, it's lucky for you!"

Fred strode into the square of green sward and said sternly:

"I am Fred Fair, and I second Roger Benton in this affair."

"And this is my second, Isaac Shaw," said Smith.

"Shaw held out his hand, saying:

"How are yer, Fair? What have yer got to say fer yer man? Shall we toss for corners?"

Fred ignored the fellow's hand and said coldly:

"There seems to be little choice in that. I hardly think we need toss. In regard to the length of the bout, shall we limit the rounds?"

An ugly oath escaped Shaw.

"Limit?" he growled. "It's a finish fight, if I hear meself think."

"Yes, a finish fight," insisted Smith.

"I will consult with my man," said Fred. "What will constitute a knockout? A single knockdown?"

Smith and Shaw laughed jeeringly.

"What do ye think this is? An exhibition mill?" sneered Shaw.

"I merely wished to define the matter," said Fred, coolly. "We are not hedging, you understand. But if you mean to make this a murderous affair—"

"It's fight until one or the other squeals or gives in," said Shaw. "That's fair enough. If your man's afraid, he can quit now."

"It is settled," said Fred, stiffy. "I will give you an answer at once."

Fred reported to Roger. Presently he turned and said:

"My man agrees to the terms. Come to the mark."

Smith was already stripped to the waist. Shaw had a bottle and sponge and was rubbing his man's muscles. Roger simply pulled off coat and vest and rolled up his sleeves.

"Where's your liniment and sponge?" asked Shaw, in surprise.

"We leave that to you," said Roger. "It is for the man that needs it."

"Don't crow so early," jeered Shaw. "Now, my bantam, lick the spurs offen him. Sic 'em!"

Smith leaped forward and danced up to Roger. The latter simply stood on the defensive. A scornful smile was on Smith's face.

With the blinding quickness of lightning he made a pass at Roger's head. But the young clerk lightly dodged it. The next blow he easily parried. Again and again Smith led.

For some moments this continued, and Roger made no effort to make a return. This angered Smith, and he began a jeering tirade. It did not rattle Roger in the least, nor cause him to change his plan.

Fred half divined the shrewd purpose of his man, though Roger's style was not his. He was elated, however, at Smith's inability to hit Roger.

Round after round thus went on. Smith tried rushing tactics, but Roger easily evaded him. So far he had not struck a blow.

Shaw swore furiously, and Smith did the same.

"Tenth round!" said Fred. "We shall have to call this a draw."

But Roger only smiled. He had been watching Smith closely. He saw that the villain's futile rage and his vain efforts had begun to tell on him. He was decided to take the initiative now.

So when Smith rushed again, he stood still. A smashing blow was aimed at his head. Roger dropped just low enough to catch it on the shoulder. As Smith's fist lodged there it brought him close in, and quick as lightning and with the force of a mule's hind leg, Roger's right arm went out. It struck his man just under the jaw.

Smith turned a complete back somersault. Fred Fair declared afterwards many times that it should have been a knockout blow. Shaw rushed to his man's aid. Fred began counting. But Smith staggered to his feet and finished the round.

But he did no more rushing. In a dazed manner he simply sparred. After the round he staggered to his corner.

"Let us call this the finish," said Roger, generously.

"Not much!" cried Shaw. But Smith whispered in his ear:

"I can't last it out. That was a jaw-cracker and a chance hit. Call the gang in and do 'em up."

With this Shaw blew a little whistle. Instantly from the shadows of the cedar grove there rushed forth a dozen stalwart forms. With hoarse cries they rushed about Fred and Roger, and for a moment it looked as if they would be annihilated. It was a bit of treachery characteristic of the instigators.

CHAPTER XIX.

FATHER AND SON.

It was a dark outlook for Fred and Roger at that moment. It looked as if they would be roughly handled by the gang of toughs.

But fortunately Fred had provided for this contingency. He let forth a peculiar owl-like screech. Then from beyond the campus fence came the reply in swelling volume:

"Ha—ha—hippety—ha!
Hand—in—Hand,
Rah—rah—rah!"

It was the cry of the Hand-in-Hand Club, familiar on ball field and lake, and had rung forth the paeans of many a brilliant victory.

(To be continued.)

FACTS WORTH READING

ROBERT COLLIER'S NEW CRAFT.

The preliminary trials of a flying boat, weighing nearly a ton, constructed by W. Starling Burgess, of Marblehead, Mass., for Robert Collier, of New York, were held off Marblehead Neck the other afternoon. Frank Coffyn, the aviator, guided the boat, and both he and his machinist declare that the tests were perfectly satisfactory.

Mr. Collier did not witness the flights, but he is expected to arrive the latter part of this week and remain to see several flights which will be made within the next ten days, after which the craft will be shipped to New York.

Although Mr. Collier has denied that he has any intention of making an overocean flight in the boat, it was said to-night, at the Burgess works, that the craft would make a long trip after minor alterations had been completed. The boat is the largest air craft in existence. The engine weighs 700 pounds and developed something better than 225 horse-power. Eighty-five miles an hour was made when the highest speed was developed, and while driven over the surface of the bay before taking the air, the indicator registered fifty miles an hour.

SIXTEEN HOURS IN QUICKSAND.

Imbedded waist-deep in the quicksands along the west bank of the Schuylkill, Peter Francis, 20 years old, was rescued by Edward Allison, the steward of the Sedgeley Boat Club, after he had been held in the mire from 3 o'clock in the afternoon until 7.30 the following morning.

How the youth managed to keep alive is more than the surgeons at the German Hospital can explain. He is partly paralyzed and can speak only in monosyllables. He has not been able to tell how he came to be in the river. He was within sight of thousands of pedestrians, all the afternoon, crossing the bridge above him, but nobody saw him.

While rowing down the river Allison saw what he thought was the body of a man, rowed over to it and then called for assistance to enable him to recover it. Two men came to his help, and when they saw that the supposed dead body was a living human being one rushed to call the ambulance, while Allison and the other dragged Francis from the quicksand.

The theory of the police is that he was walking along the river banks and slipped from a slippery stone and fell into the mire.

MANUFACTURING IN ILLINOIS DOUBLED IN TEN YEARS.

Reports show that this state ranks third in manufactures among the states of the Union, being exceeded only by New York and Pennsylvania. The output of Illinois in 1909, say the latest figures available, was \$1,919,277,000. The next state in rank is Massachusetts with \$1,490,529,000, and the next Ohio with \$1,437,936,000. No state adjoining Illinois produced a third as much manufactured goods.

Of the manufactures produced in Illinois is \$1,281,171,000 worth of produce in Chicago and \$638,106,000 in the smaller cities in the state. During the previous ten years

the manufactures in Chicago increased about 50 per cent., while those in the rest of the state increased 100 per cent. That is to say, the smaller cities of Illinois was more than twice as rapid as the growth of those located in Chicago.

The cities of Illinois, exclusive of Chicago, produce about \$100,000,000 more in manufactured products than the entire state of Wisconsin or the whole of Indiana or Missouri and about \$400,000,000 more than the state of Iowa.

It is not generally realized that fifty-three of the 102 counties of Illinois produce coal. The state is exceeded only by Pennsylvania and West Virginia in its output of this mineral. More than 41,000,000 tons of bituminous coal a year are produced by the mines of Illinois, about 25 per cent. more than the total United States output of bituminous coal in 1880. The fourth state in coal production is Ohio, with 30,000,000 tons, and the fifth Indiana with 16,000,000.

The leading coal producing counties of Illinois, ranked in the order of their output, are Williamson, St. Clair, Sangamon, Macoupin, Madison, Saline, Vermillion, Franklin, and Montgomery, all in the southern half of the state.

DEER CAUGHT IN TREE.

Deer in the Adirondacks are becoming bolder every day and stray out from the forests to the clearings and fishermen who return from the north report seeing them along the streams in large numbers.

Attorney W. Earl Ward and James Fitzgerald of Little Falls, N. Y., while fishing on the Indian River, way up in Hamilton county, miles back from civilization, saw a deer making a desperate effort to free its head from a tree trunk. The first thought of the fisherman was that some degenerate woodsmen had set a trap for the deer by placing a salt lick in the hollow tree trunk.

It turned out, however, that there was an opening in the tree trunk just large enough for the deer to get its head in at the bottom and when it raised, the animal was caught in the narrow opening. It must have been held for several days, for its head and neck were badly skinned in its frantic endeavor to free itself.

Messrs. Fitzgerald and Ward went to the struggling animal's assistance, and frightened by the noise of human voices, the animal made further futile efforts to pull over the tree and release itself. Several times in approaching the deer the fishermen came near being kicked, and one blow on the leg meant a broken leg, which would not be relished so far in the woods.

Finally Attorney Ward secured a big stick and pried the animal's head down to where it had entered the tree trunk and had it released. Then the animal, though exhausted from its long captivity, made a plunge for the forest. Several times it fell, but the last seen of the animal it was going deeper into the woods. Messrs. Ward and Fitzgerald count the incident as one of the most novel that they have had since going into the woods and both are experienced men in the big forest.

YOUNG TOM BROWN

OR,

THE BOY WHO KNEW HIS BUSINESS

By ED. KING

(A SERIAL STORY.)

CHAPTER I.

A BAD BLOW FOR DIMSDALE.

"No," said Mr. Boggs, decidedly. "No, Tom Brown, I can't do it, and you can tell your father so. It is quite out of the question, as matters stand."

"But, Mr. Boggs," replied the bright-looking boy of nineteen, who stood hat in hand facing the cashier of the First National Bank of Dimsdale, Illinois, "you know my father to be an honest man. You know that he will pay the rate, just as soon as he gets on his feet again."

"Very true, Tom," smiled the cashier; "but that's not business. Your father is now an old man and paralyzed. The fact of his having been the principal builder here entitles him to the respect and sympathy of his neighbors, but when you come and ask the bank to loan him a thousand dollars on his unendorsed note, that's another thing. Your father will never be able to attend to business again; his property is heavily mortgaged, and sooner or later he is bound to go to the wall."

"Not while I live, sir," replied Tom, drawing himself up proudly.

"You!" smiled the cashier. "What can you do? You are only a boy."

"That may be, but I'm a boy who knows his business, Mr. Boggs."

"Indeed! And what may your business be, Tom?"

"My father's business is mine, Mr. Boggs," said the boy, with flashing eye. "It is just one month now since father was paralyzed. The doctors say that he may live for years, but he will never be able to walk again. He has got this contract at the paper mill, and if he can only carry it out, it will set him all right. The brick dealer and the lumber man will give him credit, if he can only push the job through to the first payment; he is all right to finish the new mill, and that, according to our figures, will put us a thousand dollars to the good. All we want is ready cash to pay the men with, and then we can make a start."

Mr. Boggs listened to Tom's enthusiastic talk with a bored look upon his face.

"All a delusion, my boy," he said, patronizingly. "Your father is out of the race. The paper mill contract is entirely too big for you to handle. Better give it all up and go and take a place on a farm. You can get ten dollars a month and your board—"

"And what about my father?" broke in Tom. "My

mother is dead, as you know; there's no one but my sister to look after him. Are they to starve?"

"Not at all," replied the cashier, coldly. "The place for your father, Tom, is the poorhouse. As for your sister, she had better go out to service. There are plenty of people in town in need of good kitchen girls, and—"

"Stop!" cried Tom, fiery red now. "I see your game. Mr. Boggs, this is your idea of gratitude. Good-day."

"You're impertinent, boy!" retorted the cashier. "So much for trying to advise. I should think—"

"Have you forgotten what my father did for you?" flashed Tom. "When you came to Dimsdale sick, poor and struggling, who took you in and provided for you? Who loaned you money to start in business? Who—"

"That will do! Get out of my office!" broke in the cashier. "You needn't think you can come here to bulldoze me, Tom Brown. Keep your hands off that money, sir! How dare you touch it. Next thing I know you will be putting it in your pocket. Get out, I say!"

It was a trying moment for Tom. Inadvertently he had laid his hand upon a large pile of bills which rested upon Mr. Boggs' desk.

Tom had observed the money, of course, but he had not the least intention of touching it; that his hand came down upon it at all was just the purest accident.

It was after banking hours, and he and Mrs. Boggs were alone in the office. The cashier was old and sickly, while Tom was young and strong. It would have been just the easiest matter in the world for the boy to have knocked the mean old moneylender—for Mr. Boggs was nothing more—down where he stood, and to have seized the money and run, and we are obliged to admit that when he was accused of doing what he had never dreamed of doing some such idea did enter Tom's head, but only to be instantly rejected, and he turned on his heels and strode out of the bank, burning with rage and chagrin.

He had not yet reached the street when a thunderous report, louder than a hundred cannons, broke upon his ears.

"Merciful heaven! What's that?" gasped Mr. Boggs, rushing into the banking room after Tom, who flung the door open and dashed into the street.

The next instant "Young Tom Brown," as everybody called the boy, to distinguish him from his father, who was also Tom Brown, found himself sprawling on his back in the middle of the main street without having much idea how he got there.

The sky was black as night, the wind was sweeping over

Dimsdale with frightful fury, shattering everything in its path.

In short, it was a cyclone. Just as Tom came out of the bank, the big, black, funnel-shaped cloud, which many persons had been watching, descended upon the doomed town.

It cut through it like a knife.

Buildings were crashing in every direction, before Young Tom Brown could fairly regain his feet.

The bank went down like paper, the opera house, which everybody felt so proud of, was reduced to a mass of bricks and beams in an instant. The plough works, the paper mill, the big hat factory and a hundred dwelling houses and stores all met with a similar fate, and that many people lost their lives, need scarcely be said.

Of course a season of terrible confusion and excitement followed.

To describe all that happened in Dimsdale in that awful hour is entirely beyond our purpose, for we have only to do with what concerned Young Tom Brown.

Tom had never seen a cyclone, but like every Western boy, he had heard a lot about them, and he was wild with excitement when he managed at last to regain his feet.

Even in that short space of time the worst was over, and a clear sky was seen beyond the blackness, which overhung the wrecked town.

The crash of the fallen buildings, the shrieks and screams of the wounded rang in Tom's ears, as he tried to pull himself together, but naturally the first person Tom thought of was the man who had once been his father's best friend, whom he had left behind him in the bank.

Now the bank, strangely enough, was not the complete wreck that the surrounding buildings were.

The upper story had fallen, and the building was badly twisted out of shape, but the banking room itself had scarcely been disturbed.

Tom dashed in through the door, more forgiving than most boys would have been, and intent on helping Mr. Boggs if he needed help.

The banker was not there, the inner office was deserted, and as Tom ran into it, he saw that the money on the desk was gone.

He hurried out, to meet Mr. Boggs standing near the door without a hat, with the blood streaming down over his face, and looking very much dazed.

"Are you hurt, sir?" asked Tom, running up to him.

"Hurt? Yes, I suppose I'm hurt," stammered Mr. Boggs. "This is an awful thing. Pity your father is paralyzed, Young Tom Brown. This would be his harvest. Ha! ha! The building business will be lively in Dimsdale now."

Tom stared. He had never thought of it, but as he looked around at the scene of the wreck it was plain enough to him now.

It is an ill wind that blows nobody good. The cyclone had blown Dimsdale down, but who was going to build it up again?

There was only one builder in Dimsdale, and that was the paralyzed father of Young Tom Brown.

CHAPTER II.

THE GIRL IN THE CUPOLA.

Tom thought hard, as he ran at full speed toward his father's house.

"It's so! It's just as old Boggs says!" he reflected. "The building business will be on the big boom in Dimsdale for the next year, and who is to do it is a question that comes right home to us. Oh, if father was only himself, but he isn't, and the whole responsibility falls on me. Well, I accept it. I'll show people that I know my business. Go to work on a farm, indeed! Send Ella out to service when there is business like this floating about! Well, I guess not! If I do my name's not Tom Brown!"

Tom rushed into the house, blazing with excitement.

"Oh, Tom! I'm so glad you have come! Father is frightened almost to death about you. Run into the other room and relieve his mind."

Mr. Brown was trembling with excitement when he greeted his son.

First thing was to tell him just what had happened, and to explain the fate of this building and that.

"The line of the blow just missed us, Tom," said Mr. Brown, after he had quieted down a bit. "It was a wonderful escape. Oh, my boy, if this misfortune only had not come upon me! Oh, if I was only what I once was, I would soon build up our fortunes again."

"It isn't too late, father. It can be done yet," Tom quietly said.

"No, no! It is impossible, Tom. You're a good boy, but it is just as Mr. Boggs says, you are too young. I felt sure he would not make the loan, deep as his obligation is to me. Boggs is a hard, close-fisted fellow, and none too honest. He would never think of trusting a boy like you."

"I'll show him whether I am to be trusted or not," replied Tom. "I haven't worked nights with you in the shop for nothing, father. Remember, it is almost two years now since you began to teach me the building trade. And since I left school, six months ago, I have been hard at it night and day."

"Indeed you have, Tom, and you are a good son, if ever a man had one, but you are only a boy; you could never stand up against a situation like this."

"I can, father, and I will. You wait and see."

"But, Tom, you don't realize. Builders will fairly flock into Dimsdale. They will come from Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Louis, from all over. What show will you stand?"

"Every show. We are on the spot. Once I prove to the people that I know my business, they will give me the preference."

"No, no, Tom! You will find that there is but little friendship in business. With me to advise you, I suppose it is possible that we might make it go if we had time, but there will be no time given us. Besides, where is the money coming from to start with? My affairs are in wretched shape, and my credit is strained to the utmost. I think the best thing I can do is to sell out the shop to the first builder who comes along. No doubt I shall have offers now, and—"

(To be continued.)

FROM ALL POINTS

Captain J. B. Briggs, of Russellville, Ky., has a natural cold storage arrangement on his premises, in the shape of a capacious cave. The temperature varies only about a degree (48-49), and fruit and vegetables keep in perfect condition the year round. He is exploiting the cave commercially to good advantage.

In the will of Mary M. Guth, filed in Probate Court, Akron, O., all of her property and estate is left to her husband, George Guth, on condition that he does not marry again. In case her husband marries again the will provides that he shall receive none of the estate, but shall be made executor of the will.

President Timothy Healey, of New York, told the eleventh biennial convention of the International Brotherhood of Stationary Engineers in Pittsburg that the poorest paid powerhouse employees in the country were in the government buildings scattered throughout the United States, and that they had not received a wage increase in twenty years. Firemen, oilers, water tenders and others, he declared, receive an average of \$65 a month, the lowest wage paid to men who perform that service. Secretary McAdoo recently had been led to favor a minimum wage of \$3 a day for such workmen, he said.

Vandals entered Bellefontaine, the estate of Giraud Foster, some time the other night and destroyed a number of terra-cotta statues which were set up along the main drive, which leaves the Lenox-Stockbridge Road about a mile south of this village, and winds through dense woods. A feature of the drive was a small temple with a marble figure of Adonis. This statue was overturned. Officers believe that the mischief was the work of drunken youths who have also been under suspicion of having committed some of the burglaries in Lenox. It is said that the damage to the Foster property will reach \$5,000.

After a voyage of more than nine thousand miles, seven-eighths of which was unnecessary, the steamer Kinross dropped anchor in the harbor of New York the other day. On June 22 the Kinross sailed from Cardenas, Cuba, to Newport News, expecting to discharge her cargo at that port. The agents of the vessel, however, awaited her with instructions, and the captain was forced to head across the Atlantic to Queenstown. There it was learned that a higher price for sugar might be obtained in the American market, so on July 25 the vessel started for New York, arriving yesterday. If the steamer had come here directly from Cuba the voyage would have been little more than 1,200 miles.

Edward Musse, an American born German, now a bartender in one of the hotels at Delaware Water Gap, near Easton, Pa., will come into possession of \$250,000 after six years provided he stays continuously employed at the

job he now holds and does not quit after he learns he is heir to a fortune. This is one of the tantalizing provisions set down in the will of an eccentric uncle who died recently in Germany. To appease the nephew the will provides that he may receive \$65,000 a year as an income until he reaches the age of 30 years. He is now 24 and single. If married "respectable" before Jan. 1, 1914, the will provides that he shall receive \$14,000 a year additional from each of two aunts who have charge of the estate. Musse is well educated. He speaks three languages and has been the support of his widowed mother in Philadelphia for the past ten years. No matter what he may desire to do, the will requires that he shall continue to mix and "sling" highballs for six years before he can become a wealthy man.

August 9 was the last day under the Alien Land Act passed by the late Legislature, on which Japanese, either as individuals or corporations, could acquire land in California. Individuals now holding land may continue to do so during their natural lives, but may not devise it to Japanese heirs. Corporations formed before the law went into effect may hold land for fifty years. A number of such corporations have recently been recorded. "No object of the law has been defeated by these corporations," says Attorney-General Webb, who devised the bill into its present form. "The law was not intended to force Japanese now owning land to part with it at once or within any fixed period. They were to be permitted to hold it during their lives. By forming corporations they merely extended time of ownership. But after Aug. 10 the object of the law, which is to prevent an increase in the amount of alien holdings and gradually to break up the colonies now existing, will be attained."

A fireman was killed and another probably fatally injured at a \$150,000 fire, which recently swept the 10th street side of the Standard Oil Company's big plant at Hunter's Point, N. Y. Four alarms soon after 5 o'clock brought out a large force of fire fighters, but the flames could not be checked before they reached 9th street and partly consumed the company's pier. Bertram Johnson, of No. 487 Amsterdam avenue, Manhattan, was almost instantly killed when a high pressure nozzle on the fireboat Abram H. Hewitt was torn from the deck and hurled upon him. The pressure through the nozzle was estimated at 276 pounds to the square inch when the accident occurred. Lieutenant O'Farrell, of Engine Company 286, was thrown to the street when his engine, on the way to the fire, struck a sand heap and swerved about, almost overturning. He received a fracture of the skull and was not expected to live by the physicians of St. John's Hospital, Long Island City, where he was taken. The oil tanks which dotted the yards were quickly emptied by employees of the company. The oil was pumped through underground pipes to the Newtown Creek and Bayonne plants.

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BRIEF BUT POINTED ITEMS

The following peculiar advertisement appears in the London Times: "Scientific treasure hunting expedition, travelling on the Mexican, Central and South American coasts, has vacancies for two young gentlemen. A spirit of adventure and the highest references are required. Possibility of big fortune and certainty of thrilling adventures. Must invest 500 pounds (\$2,500) each. Apply to Dr. Battle, Santa Barbara, California."

Two million, sixty-eight thousand, six hundred and ninety-three acres of agricultural lands near Fort Peck, Montana, will be opened to settlement in September, it was announced at the Interior Department recently. Filing for lands is to begin September 1, and the drawing will begin at Glasgow, Montana, on September 23. Government experts estimate that development of this property will add 20,000,000 bushels of grain annually to the nation's output.

There are about 200 tea tasters in New York. The habits of the men are exceedingly curious. Some of them refuse to ply their trade save in the morning, on the ground that the sense of taste cannot be trusted after it has been bewildered by hours of work. Most of them avoid the use of tobacco and of highly-seasoned food. Their accuracy of taste is astonishing. A tea taster will grade and price a dozen qualities of tea all from the same cargo.

Tobacco is exceedingly efficacious in the killing of microbes, according to Messrs. Langlais and Sartory, of Paris, who state their experiments have shown that in five minutes tobacco smoke will kill almost all the microbes in the saliva, thus nearly completely sterilizing the mouth. One of the experiments carried out by MM. Langlais and Sartory was to place several cigars in water containing many million cholera microbes to the square inch. The tobacco sterilized and destroyed the microbes in twenty-four hours.

The average farmer's wife lifts a ton of water a day in her household duties, it is announced by the United States Bureau of Education in a special bulletin. The calculation was made by Joe Cook, president of the Mississippi Normal

College, as follows: She averages six journeys to the well, just for water for the cooking. At each trip she handles the water five times—from the well to the surface, from the pump to the kitchen, then into the kettle, from the kettle to the dishpan, from the dishpan to the outdoor sink. On each trip to the well she draws two pails, each holding two gallons of water. This is 200 pounds a tip or 1,200 pounds a day. The other 800 pounds is carried for bathing, scrubbing, etc. "The lifting of a ton a day," adds Prof. Cook, "will take the elasticity out of a woman's step, the bloom out of her cheek, and the enjoyment from her soul." He figures that \$250 would equip a farm with a power pump that would end all the drudgery.

JOKES AND JESTS.

Mrs. Hibrow—Don't you find the Stone Age interesting? Mrs. Lowbrow—Yes, indeed! Willie's just that age now, but it's awfully hard on the windows!

Man (in theater, to woman in front)—Madam, I paid one dollar and a half for this seat, and your hat—" Woman (calmly)—That hat cost forty dollars.

Western Man—We had a terrible conflagration in Dugout City last week. Only seventeen houses left standing. Eastern Man—My goodness! How many were there before the fire? Western Man—Nineteen.

"Sanders, have another drink," a friend said, entering a bar where MacHoot was just tossing off a glass of whisky. "Na, na," answered Sanders MacHoot. "I wadna hae anither, but ye can pay for this if ye like."

Kitty—You didn't look a bit pleased when Fred told you you were the best girl in all the world. Esther—Had I shown how pleased I was, it would have so tickled his vanity that he'd be saying the same thing to every girl he met.

Wife (pleadingly)—I'm afraid, Jack, you do not love me any more—any way, as well as you used to. Husband—Why? Wife—Because you always let me get up to light the fire now. Husband—Nonsense, my love! Your getting up to light the fire makes me love you all the more.

It was after the concert, and the talent was, as usual, being criticised. "I certainly envy that man who sang the bass solo," ventured a young man. "Why?" inquired one of the young ladies, in astonishment. "I thought he had a very poor voice." "So did I. But just think of his nerve!"

The young man was trying to select a jeweled belt for the young lady to whom he was engaged. "What size do you wish, sir?" asked the salesgirl. The prospective bridegroom blushed and stammered: "Really, I don't know." Then a thought struck him. "Lend me your tape measure," he said. The measure was handed to him and he laid it on the inside of his arms, from shoulder to wrist. "Twenty inches, please," he said, with decision.

WILD RANCH LIFE IN NEW SOUTH WALES.

By Alexander Armstrong.

Years ago, when I had a sheep ranch at the intersection of the Murrumbide and the Lachian rivers, New South Wales, the Australian bushranger was at his best. I was the agent of an English syndicate, which owned 200,000 acres of land and as many sheep, and was at the same time buying and shipping living curiosities to the great animal dealer at Hamburg. The natives of Australia have been thumped about by the English soldiery until they have no spirit left, but in those days a portion of them were as bad as the Apaches of the United States. Out in the wilds they were on the alert for travelers and pioneers, and, though the English always affected to despise them, it is a fact that every battle ground on the vast island has proved them fierce fighters.

When I finally got settled at the point I have named I had quite an army under me. We had about twenty huts, a stockade inclosing an acre of ground, several big sheep pens, two or three horse pens, a dirt fort, surrounded by palisades, and the number of natives employed as herders was over fifty. Most of these had their wives and children with them, and as there were five white men besides myself it will be seen that we were a pretty strong party. We needed to be. We had gone a full hundred miles beyond civilization, and right into the stronghold of the bushrangers and the fighting natives. Three different surveying parties sent out by the government, the last accompanied by seventy-five soldiers, had been attacked and routed with severe loss. It was expected that I would have trouble, and we arranged for it. About thirty of the natives had previously been employed in sheep-herding, and were used to firearms. I bought two pieces of artillery at Sydney, and took them along for our fort, and we were plentifully supplied with muskets, repeating carbines, and ammunition. Our coming was a surprise to the denizens, and we had time to get settled before they had perfected their plans to attack us. We had at that time only about 20,000 sheep, and over half the herders could be spared for the work of building the pens and erecting the stockades.

Our village was erected on a fine plateau of about two acres in extent. The ground fell away gradually on all sides, and the nearest scrub was about a quarter of a mile from us on the east. A bit of land which we called the "thumb" broke away from the forest to the east and pushed its way into the prairie toward us. This neck, or thumb, was half a mile long and not over twenty rods wide, and offered splendid cover to a force advancing upon us. I saw at once that it would be the point of attack, and at the end I built a sheep pen a hundred feet wide and two hundred feet long. The side toward us was ten feet high. Our two six-pounders were then loaded with shell and trained upon the pen. We dug two rifle pits on the flanks of our fort, facing this thumb, and a week before the alarm came we had everything in good shape for a fight. I was very anxious to have it come. It was bound to come sooner or later, and until we had been attacked and given our assailants a good thrashing there could be no such thing as security.

One day, when I was almost cursing the natives for their

slowness in attack, two white men rode up to the post. I knew them for bushrangers at a glance. They had the attire and the demeanor, and were mounted on fine horses and carried rifles and revolvers. One of them dismounted at the door of my office and came in. He was a fellow about forty years old, stout as an ox, and evidently had plenty of nerve, or he would not have shown himself there at all. When we had passed the time of day he asked for whisky, tossed down a big draught, and then said:

"Now, captain, to bizness. Hev ye come to stay?"

"I have."

"How much are ye willin' to pay?"

"For what?"

"Fur bein' let alone. You was gettin' settled and wa-all upset, and it wouldn't hev bin manners to call on ye sooner. The boys want to know now what they kin count on."

"I don't exactly understand you," I said.

"You don't! I took you fur an old campaigner. This 'ere land belongs to us. We are willin' to rent it to you fur a fair price. If we make a bargain it will include our purtection."

"This is government land, or was until we filed our pa-pers and made a first payment."

"Was it? D'ye see any guv'ment round 'ere anywhere? Any redcoats at hand to purtect ye?"

"We can protect ourselves. If your gang and the natives want to live at peace with me, all right. If you want trouble I'll give you fighting until you are sick of it."

"Whew!" he exclaimed in genuine astonishment. "Well, if that don't beat me! So you don't propose to pay us rent?"

"Not a cent."

"And you don't want our purtection?"

"No, sir!"

"Why, man, you must be crazy! Thar are a dozen or more of us bushboys, and we kin raise a force of three hundred natives to swoop down on ye! By Sunday ye won't have a sheep nor a hut nor a man left, and I'll hev yer ears fur keepsakes."

"Come and try it," I replied. "Let me alone and I'll let you alone, but if you attack me I'll not rest until the last of you are under ground."

He looked at me as if he doubted my sanity, and after a bit, helped himself to another glass of whisky and went out without a word. After a confab with his companion he returned to the door and explained.

"Say, Kurnel, we like yer pluck, but ye must come down with the rent or take yer chances. It wouldn't do, you know! If we let up on you thar'd be a dozen fellers in 'ere with their sheepses inside of a year, and we'd hev to cut sticks or go to the poorhouse."

"Come as soon as you like," I replied, without looking up at him, and he muttered an oath and rode off.

I called in some of the most intelligent natives, and we were soon agreed that no attack need be looked for under three days. It would take the bushrangers that long to stir up the natives and get them together. When the natives were asked how we would be approached they pointed to the "thumb" and criticised my action in erecting the sheep pen, which offered an enemy a shield of observation. No native Australian will move by night if it can be

avoided, and no night attacks are ever made by them. We decided that on the third night the attacking force would gather on the thumb and be ready to attack us at daylight, and our plans were laid accordingly. Neither the bushrangers nor the natives knew that we had cannon. They knew that we had muskets, but they could not say how many. We should have to depend entirely upon ourselves, as a troop of soldiers could not have been sent for and reached us inside of a week.

On the second day after the visit from the bushranger some of the herders saw signs of the coming attack. The natives were moving swiftly about in considerable numbers, and it was further evident that spies were watching us. That night I had the sheep herded between the Lachlan River and a bluff, where ten men could hold them safely. The night passed quietly. Next day the "signs" were more numerous, and toward sundown one of my scouts came in with the information that a force numbering at least four hundred natives and twenty white men was coming through the scrub in the direction of the thumb. This was good news to me. The sheep were brought in and herded as before, and when night had fully come I put fifteen natives in each rifle pit and gathered all the rest of my people into the fort. We had talked matters over until every one knew what was expected of him. My natives were promised certain things in case they fought as I directed, and they were only too anxious for the day to break and the ball to open. At midnight one of them crept down and found the big sheep pen crowded full of men, and there was no longer any doubt that the attack would be made with the dawn.

Some of us caught a little sleep as the night wore on, but we were all wide enough awake when the first signs of daylight came. When it was light enough for us to see the pen a mass of natives swarmed suddenly around each corner of it, and made a dash for the fort. We talk about the yells of our Indians, but a native Australian can out-yell three of them. They swarmed over the plain in a great mob, yelling, shrieking, and brandishing their spears and clubs, and they might have thought us asleep until they came within pistol shot. Then they were between the rifle pits, and a volley was fired which took the pluck out of them in a minute. We swept them with a fire in front, and back they went for shelter, leaving over forty dead and wounded on the grass. Not a white man had come with them, but I soon discovered the reason. They had divided themselves into two parties, and had skulked around to attack our rear. I called in five natives from each rifle pit, and in a few minutes we were posted to meet all the dangers. It was ten minutes before the natives could get their courage up to charge again, but when they did come they evidently felt savage. The three bodies assailed us at once, and for five minutes it was hot enough for the oldest veteran. The bushrangers were surprised to find us inside of stout earth walls and palisades, but they fought well and broke back only when they saw how useless their efforts were. Two were killed out of one party, and three out of the other, and when the charge was over the natives literally cumbered the earth.

Now for the field-pieces. The mob had gathered in the big sheep pen to reform, and we could hear their angry chatter and the oaths of the white men when I gave orders

to fire. The two reports sounded as one, and the two shells went screaming through the pen. It was the finishing stroke, and it is doubtful if the records of war can show greater execution by two missiles. We found twenty-seven men killed by those shells, and the moral effect was greater than the presence of a regiment of soldiers. Two of the victims were bushrangers, making seven we had bagged, and it was afterward learned that two more died of their wounds. On those killed we got a government reward of upward of 900 pounds, it transpiring that all were old offenders.

About two weeks after the battle an English tourist came into the station on foot and badly used up. He had been captured by bushrangers at a point about twenty-five miles away, robbed of horse, money, and clothing, and he came to us as naked as they day he was born. The leader of the ruffians who despoiled him was the chap who paid me a visit before the battle. He had received a bullet through the calf of the leg, and panted for revenge. He spared the tourist in order to make a messenger of him. He sent me word that he would have my life if he had to wait a dozen years for a chance to take it, and I was not egotist enough to let the warning go unheeded. I felt that I was safe about the grounds, and I never went off them without being on my guard. I was fond of hunting, and often rode long distances, and if the bushranger was still thirsting for my life he would seek it on some of these occasions. Several months went by, however, and, as I had neither seen nor heard of him, I naturally grew more careless. It was five months, I believe, before the hour of peril came.

At noon one very hot day I was riding across a prairie of several miles in extent, having been out to locate a grazing ground for a new flock. I was within a mile of the scrub when a horseman rode out of it and charged at me. We were facing each other, and it didn't take me a minute to make up my mind that the stranger was my old enemy the bushranger. Instead of waiting to ambush me he was coming out for a fair fight. I had a seven-shooter carbine and a revolver, and he had the same. I halted my horse, slipped out of the saddle, and as he came thundering on I shot his horse in the breast, and he went down. The rider was up like a cat, and, kneeling beside his horse, he fired five shots at me as fast as he could pull trigger. I heard the ping of every bullet, though I was busily shooting at him. His carbine fouled with the fifth shot, and he sprang up and pulled his revolver. I still had two shots left, and I knew I could kill him. He must come nearer to make his pistol effective, and he was gathering himself for the run, when Providence stepped in to prevent me from shedding his blood. He was standing near the hind feet of his horse. The dying animal suddenly drew up both feet and gave a tremendous kick, and the outlaw was knocked over and over on the grass. As he lay perfectly quiet, I finally advanced to find him dead, his whole right side crushed in by the powerful blow. I found about 400 pounds in gold about him, together with three fine watches he had taken from travelers, and it was evident from the way he had packed things that he was only waiting to kill me before leaving for some distant part of the country. He was the last bushranger seen in that district, which to-day contains five or six towns and a white population of thousands.

GOOD READING

A year's extension has been granted for the completion of the Cape Cod Canal, which is now due to be opened in June, 1915. This will be the first link in a chain of inland waterways which it is hoped will ultimately extend from Boston, Mass., to Beaufort, N. C. The route will include Long Island Sound, New York Harbor, the Delaware and Raritan Canal, the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal and a system of canals south of Norfolk. A bill is now before Congress which seeks to have the Federal Government purchase the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal and enlarge it sufficiently to meet the needs of coastwise service.

In the kingdom of Poland there was formerly a law, according to which any person found guilty of slander was compelled to walk on all fours through the streets of the town where he lived accompanied by the beadle, as a sign that he was unworthy of the name of man. At the next public festival he was compelled to appear crawling upon hands and feet underneath the banqueting table, and barking like a dog. Every guest was at liberty to give him as many kicks as he chose, and he who had been slandered must, toward the end of the banquet, throw a picked bone to the culprit, who, picking it up with his mouth, would leave the room on all fours.

The discovery of the most ancient fossil skeleton of a mammal ever found on this continent, was announced by Prof. Henry Fairfield Osborne, of the American Museum of Natural History on his arrival at Durango, Col., with a party of scientists from the desert sixty miles southwest of Farmington, N. M. The skeleton was found in the Kimbeton Draw by the Museum party, headed by Walter Granger, and, according to Prof. Osborne, represents the beginning of mammalian life on this continent. The specimen is that of an animal, about the size of a wolf and evidently an herbivorous animal. In the same draw three complete skulls were found, one of a large carnivorous type.

Recent statistics presented by the Cycle and Automobile Manufacturers' Association of France suggest that some day there may be a renewal of the interest and use of the bicycle in this country. According to the reports of the Association for 1912, there were in France at the close of that year 89,185 motor cars, 98,641 motor cycles, and 2,969,985 bicycles. With the exception perhaps of those who are directly interested in the bicycle industry in this country, Americans will be astonished to learn that in a single country of Europe there are nearly 3,000,000 bicycles in use, and that one person in every thirteen owns such a machine.

Only a circus snake charmer could equal the performance of Roy Miller, express messenger, W. Arnold and John Rolla, baggageman, on a Milwaukee train from Chicago. In the car was a cargo of rattlesnakes consigned from Texas

to a point in South Dakota. A big snake pushed a slat off the cage and headed straight for them. The men jumped to the tops of cream cans and other high objects. It fell to Miller's lot as express messenger to attempt a capture. With a gloved hand, while perched on a cream can, he fished for the reptile. By watching his opportunity Miller succeeded in securing it by the back of the neck. Only then would Arnold and Rolla descend from their perch and assist in returning the creature to its cage. It was more than five feet long.

The humble glow worm is to be investigated by French scientists in the hope that it will serve to solve the problem of discovering a "cold light." The great objection to all present forms of electric lights is the heat they give off. In his address to the National Society of Electricians President Daniel Berthelot says the glow worm as a machine for the production of light, is perfection itself. For every 100 units of energy expended the glow worm, with its cold, dry light, gives 100 per cent. of illumination, as against 1.2 per cent. by gas, 1.5 per cent. by electric light, and 14 per cent. by the sun. This, according to Mr. Berthelot, is due to an "electro-capillary apparatus in the worm, constituted by thousands of cells."

"Odessa, Russia, is the most dishonest town on earth," is the assertion of its police chief in accounting for the rarity of arrest and the frequency of burglaries. There are, he says, no fewer than 30,000 thieves in the city, 16 per cent. of the population, and the women thieves far outnumber the men. The harvest time for the transgressors is in summer, when all who can afford to leave Odessa in fear of the cholera. Then a round of burglaries starts with which the authorities are utterly unable to cope. One day recently there were no fewer than 364 cases against thievery and the like down for hearing in the local courts. The arrests number about a score a day. Sentences for theft are light, as it would be too expensive otherwise. It is now proposed to transport the worst of the prisoners.

The French War Department has decided that in future all war planes shall be suitably armored. The unarmored aeroplanes in use at present will be used only for training and experimental purposes. In future the French aerial fleet will be composed of the following divisions: (1) Armored one-seat planes for reconnoitering work with artillery and cavalry and short reconnaissances. These machines will have a minimum speed of seventy-five miles an hour. (2) Two-seaters for reconnaissances from headquarters, and having a minimum speed of sixty miles. (3) Two-seaters, armored and armed with quick-firing guns and automatic rifles, for pursuing hostile aeroplanes and dirigibles, with a minimum speed of seventy-five miles. (4) Machines carrying more than two persons and having a great range of action. These craft, with a minimum speed of sixty miles an hour, will be for special missions.

ARTICLES OF ALL KINDS

RUSSIAN WRITER ORDERED DEPORTED.

Ernest Jaumsem, a Russian writer, who arrived from Hamburg recently on the steamship Cincinnati, has been ordered deported by the immigration officials. They deem him "highly undesirable and unquestionably inimical to the best interests of the United States." Jaumsem, who is thirty and married, is said to have admitted escaping from prison in Siberia, where he was serving a five-year term for writing in favor of a Democratic form of government for Russia.

PETRIFIED FOREST IN TEXAS.

In Comanche County, Texas, is a petrified forest which rivals in interest the petrified forests of Arizona. Parts of trunks and boughs from the stone trees have been carried off, but great quantities of the petrified wood remain, its weight having protected it from the curio hunters. A trunk of a tree twenty feet long and ten inches in diameter is a load for four mules.

When the forest underwent petrification has not been determined. The nearest station is Comyn, Comanche County, on the Texas Central Railway. From Comyn a drive of four miles northwest takes one to the edge of the forest of stone.

Roots, bark, twigs, buds, leaves and sap sprouts are perfectly preserved. Knotholes, holes made by woodpeckers, stubs of broken twigs are all shown just as they grew, and are said to exceed in delicate tracery the petrified trees of the Black Hills, or those existing on the Nile.

A small bough was shipped to St. Louis several years ago and attracted much attention. The stone closely resembled agate and was capable of receiving a high polish. The fact that in some cases fossilization has not been fully accomplished, leaving a tree part stone and part wood, is regarded as particularly remarkable.

RARE STAMPS IN OLD FILES.

Stamp collectors are much interested in a discovery of rarities in the correspondence of the old time firm of Carroll, Hay & Co., of New Orleans. Their value is estimated at \$100,000. Among them are uncatalogued varieties of United States and Confederate Postmaster stamps and regular Government issues, as well as many of the well-known varieties of scarce stamps, such as the St. Louis issue of 1845.

The most noteworthy thing, however, is the finding of a hitherto totally unknown Postmaster provisional stamp. It is a three-cent red on buff paper, issued by the Postmaster of Tuscumbia, Ala., in 1857.

Two specimens of this stamp were in the correspondence. They are both on envelopes addressed to Carroll, Hay & Co. One of the envelopes has the provisional stamp in the right hand upper corner. In the left hand upper corner of the envelope is the postmark of the Postmaster, dated April 30, 1857. The other envelope contains the provisional stamp covered by the three-cent Government issue and postmarked May 20, 1857. The Government stamp

has since been turned down, revealing the entire provisional stamp.

The explanation of this philatelic rarity is that the provisional stamp was issued and sold by the Postmaster of Tuscumbia in a temporary shortage of Government stamps from April 30 to May 20. Then having received a fresh supply of the Government stamps the Postmaster added the regular issue to the envelope after it was mailed and before it was forwarded to New Orleans.

These two stamps are now in the possession of John A. Klemann, of 179 Broadway, having been obtained by him from Jac. Meyer, a well-known philatelist of New Orleans. Mr. Klemann values them at \$5,000. They are among the rarest of rare American stamps, rarer, in fact, than the rarest of the United States Postmaster issues.

The Berlin Museum has tried to get one of the specimens. Mr. Klemann has been offered \$1,500 each for them, but has refused to part with them at that figure.

ANGLER HOOKS MAN.

William Klein, an upholsterer, of No. 1514 Euterpe street, New Orleans, an amateur angler, experienced a narrow escape from death just as he had finished preparations for a day's sport in fishing off the Northeaster Bridge over Lake Pontchartrain, about 500 feet from North Shore.

The presence of mind of John Landry, a negro living at No. 119 North Liberty street, saved Mr. Klein from drowning. Landry cast a line and hooked Mr. Klein as the latter was sinking.

Mr. Klein, accompanied by his son, arrived at North Shore about 7 a. m. and began walking the "long bridge." When about 500 feet from the shore the crowd gathered on a small platform to permit an incoming local train to pass. Mr. Klein carried his fishing pole strapped across his shoulders. This was hit by the tender of the incoming train.

The upholsterer was thrown in the lake on the Mandeville side of the bridge, landing in the water somewhat dazed. A swift tide running at the time carried Mr. Klein under the bridge and out into the lake.

Ropes were thrown to him, but he was helpless and was rapidly floating from the bridge.

John Landry, the negro fisherman, threw his fishing line in the direction of Mr. Klein, fortunately striking him on the leg. The hook caught and the almost lifeless body was brought up and held at the surface.

Several men who witnessed the sensational rescue climbed down posts and fastened a rope to the fisherman's body. He was held there until a small fishing craft was brought to Mr. Klein's side and later he was taken ashore.

It was not until some time after his son and several of the amateur rodmen worked on the prostrate form that the man was revived.

Mr. Klein suffered pain as a result of the fishhook which caught in his leg when Landry threw the lucky line. The hook was deeply imbedded in the fleshy part of the leg and had to be cut out.

CHANGING MONEY TRICK BOX.

With this trick box you can make money change, from a penny into a dime or vice versa. Also make dimes appear and disappear at your command. Price, 10c. each by mail, postpaid.

H. F. LANG,
1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

CACHOO OR SNEEZING POWDER.

The greatest fun-maker of them all. A small amount of this powder, when blown in a room, will cause everyone to sneeze without anyone knowing where it comes from. It is very light, will float in the air for some time, and penetrate every nook and corner of a room. It is perfectly harmless. Cachoo is put up in bottles, and one bottle contains enough to be used from 10 to 15 times. Price, by mail, 10c. each; 3 for 25c.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

HENDOO FLOWER-POT TRICK

With this trick you can make a plant grow right up in a flower-pot, before the eyes of your audience. An ordinary empty earthen flower-pot is handed to the spectators for examination. A handkerchief is then placed over it, and you repeat a few magic words, and wave your wand over it. When the handkerchief is removed there is a beautiful plant, apparently in full bloom, in the pot. Full directions with each outfit. Price, 15 cents by mail, postpaid.

M. V. GALLIGAN, 419 W. 56th St., N. Y.

NOISY HANDKERCHIEF.

A great deal of amusement may be had with this little article. It imitates the blowing of the nose exactly, except that the noise is magnified at least a dozen times, and sounds like the bass-horn in a German band. This device is used by simply placing it between the teeth and blowing. The harder the blow the louder the noise. Price, 10c. each by mail, postpaid.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

NEW MASKS

Half-face masks with movable noses. A distinct novelty which will afford no end of amusement. They come in 6 styles, each a different face, such as Desperate Desmond, etc., and are beautifully colored and splendidly finished, with patent eyelets to prevent tearing. Price 15 cents apiece, by mail, postpaid.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

JAPANESE WATER FLOWERS

Without exception, the most beautiful and interesting things on the market. They consist of a dozen dried-up sprigs, neatly encased in handsomely decorated envelopes, just as they are imported from Japan. Place one sprig in a bowl of water, and it begins to exude various bright tints. Then it slowly opens out into various shapes of exquisite flowers. They are of all colors of the rainbow. It is very amusing to watch them take form. Small size, price 5 cents; large size, 10 cents a package, by mail, postpaid.

M. V. GALLIGAN, 419 W. 56th St., N. Y.

YOU ALL WANT THIS MEDAL!

You Can Get One for Six Cents!

Has a picture of Fred Fearnott on one side and Evelyn on the other. The chief characters of

"WORK AND WIN"

The Medals are beautifully fire-gilt.

In order that every reader of this Weekly may secure one or more of these medals, we have put the price away below cost, as you will see when you receive it. Send to us THREE TWO-CENT POSTAGE STAMPS, and we will send the medal to any address, postage paid, by return mail.

REMEMBER! You can secure as many medals as you want.

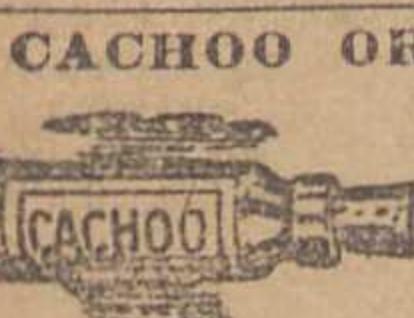
Address your envelope plainly to

FRANK TOUSEY, Publisher
168 West 23d Street, New York



Address your envelope plainly to

FRANK TOUSEY, Publisher
168 West 23d Street, New York



Sure Fire Accuracy Penetration

The World's Record Holders

Remington-U.M.C. .22 cal. cartridges have broken two records in two years.

The present world's 100-shot gallery record, 2484 ex 2500, held by Arthur Hubalek was made with these hard hitting .22's.

They will help you, too, to break your best shooting records.

Remington-U.M.C. .22's are made, too, with hollow point bullets. This increases their shocking and killing power.

Remington-U.M.C.—the perfect shooting combination

REMINGTON ARMS-UNION METALLIC CARTRIDGE CO.

299 Broadway, New York City

The Remington-U.M.C. cartridges make a find

BINGO.

It is a little metal box. It looks very innocent. But it is supplied with an ingenious mechanism which shoots off a harmless cap when it is opened. You can have more fun than a circus with this new trick. Place the BINGO in or under any article and it will go off when the article is opened or removed. It can be used as a funny joke by being placed in a purse, cigarette box or between the leaves of a magazine, also, under any movable article, such as a book, tray, dish, etc. The BINGO can also be used as a Burglar Alarm or as a Theft Preventer by being placed in a drawer, money till, under a door or window, or under any article that would be moved or disturbed should a theft be attempted.

Price 15 cents each, by mail, postpaid.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

GOOD LUCK GUN FOB

The real western article, carried by the cowboys. It is made of fine leather, with a highly nickelized buckle. The holster contains a metal gun, of the same pattern as those used by all the most famous scouts. Any boy wearing one of these fobs will attract attention. It will give him an air of western romance. The prettiest and most serviceable watch fob ever made. Send for one to-day. Price 20 cents each by mail postpaid.

M. V. GALLIGAN,
419 W. 56th St., N. Y.



THE DANCING NIGGER
A comical toy with which you can have no end of fun. It consists of a cut-out figure fastened to a thread suspended between the ends of a spring. By pressing the wires between the fingers and thumb the figure will dance in the funniest manner. Price 10 cents each, by mail, postpaid.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

DELUSION TRICK.

A magic little box in three parts that is very mystifying to those not in the trick. A coin placed on a piece of paper disappears by dropping a nickel ring around it from the magic box. Made of hard wood two inches in diameter. Price, 12c.

M. V. GALLIGAN, 419 W. 56th St., N. Y.

Wizard Repeating

LIQUID PISTOL

Nickel-plated
5 in. long
Pat'd.



Will stop the most vicious dog (or man) without permanent injury.

Perfectly safe to carry without danger of leakage. Fires and recharges by pulling the trigger. Loads from any liquid. No cartridges required. Over six shots in one loading. All dealers, or by mail, 50c. Pistol with rubber covered holster, 55c. Holsters separate, 10c. Send money order. No postage stamps or coins accepted.

PARKER, STEARNS & CO., 273 GEORGIA AVE., BROOKLYN, N. Y.

LOTS OF FUN FOR A DIME

Ventriloquist Double Throat

Fits roof of mouth; always invisible; greatest thing yet. Astonish and mystify your friends. Neigh like a horse; whine like a puppy; sing like a canary, and imitate birds and beasts of the field and forest. Loads of fun. Wonderful invention. Thousands sold. Price: only 10 cents; 4 for 25 cents, or 12 for 50 cents. Double Throat Co. Dpt. K Frenchtown, N.J.

CARD THROUGH THE HAT TRICK

With this trick you borrow a hat, and apparently shove a card up through the crown, without injuring the card or hat. The operation can be reversed, the performer seemingly pushing the card down through the crown into the hat again. It is a trick which will puzzle and interest the closest observer and detection is almost impossible. It is so simple that a child can learn how to perform it in a few minutes.

Price 10 cents each, by mail, post-paid.
M. V. GALLIGAN, 419 W. 56th St., N. Y.

MANY TOOL KEY RING.

The wonder of the age. The greatest small tool in the world. In this little instrument you have in combination seven useful tools embracing Key Ring, Pencil Sharpener, Nail Cutter and Cleaner, Watch Opener, Cigar Clipper, Letter Opener and Screw Driver. It is not a toy, but a useful article, made of cutlery steel, tempered and highly nickelized. Therefore will carry an edge the same as any piece of cutlery. As a useful tool, nothing has ever been offered to the public to equal it. Price, 15c., mailed, postpaid.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

GOOD LUCK BANKS.

Ornamental as well as useful. Made of highly nickelized brass. It holds just One Dollar. When filled it opens itself. Remains locked until refilled. Can be used as a watchcharm. Money refunded if not satisfied. Price, 10c.

L. Senarens, 347 Winthrop St., Brooklyn, N. Y.

JAPANESE DIVER.

The strangest toy on the market. They are made in Japan and look like a little red mandarin. Each manikin is furnished with a cartridge to which a pair of legs are attached. By making two pin-holes in the cartridge, attaching it to the figure, and immersing it in a glass of water the little figure will dart up and down for an hour like a real diver. Price, by mail, 25 cents each, postpaid.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

VANISHING CIGAR.

This cigar is made in exact imitation of a good one. It is held by a rubber cord which, with the attached safety pin, is fastened on the inside of the sleeve. When offered to a friend, as it is about to be taken, it will instantly disappear.

Price, 10c. each by mail, postpaid.
C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.

PIGGY IN A COFFIN.

This is a wicked pig that died at an early age, and here he is in his coffin ready for burial. There will be a great many mourners at his funeral, for this coffin, pretty as it looks, is very tricky, and the man who gets it open will feel real grief. The coffin is made of metal, perfectly shaped and beautifully lacquered. The trick is to open it to see the pig. The man that tries it gets his fingers and feelings hurt, and piggy comes out to grunt at his victims. The tubular end of the coffin, which everyone (in trying to open) presses inward, contains a needle which stabs the victim in his thumb or finger every time. This is the latest and a very "impressive" trick. It can be opened easily by anyone in the secret, and as a neat catch-joke to save yourself from a bore is unsurpassed. Price, 10c.; 3 for 25c., postpaid; one dozen by express, 75c.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

WHISTLING BIRD.

It consists of a long, thin rubber tube to be concealed under the clothing. On one end is a rubber ball to be held in the pocket. At the other end is a metal bird's head with a movable underjaw, which can be put through a lapel button hole. When you squeeze the bulb, the bird begins to chirp and sing and whistle in the most life-like manner.

Price 25 cents each, by mail, postpaid.

M. V. GALLIGAN, 419 W. 56th St., N. Y.

BUBBLER.

The greatest invention of the age. The box contains a blow-pipe of neatly enameled metal, and five tablets; also printed directions for playing numerous soap-bubble games, such as Floating Bubbles, Repeaters, Surprise Bubbles, Double Bubbles, The Boxers, Lung Tester, Supported Bubbles, Rolling Bubbles, Smoke Bubbles, Bouncing Bubbles, and many others. Ordinary bubble-blowing, with a pipe and soap water, are not in it with this scientific toy. It produces larger, more beautiful and stronger bubbles than you can get by the ordinary method. The games are intensely interesting, too.

Price, 12c. by mail.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

LATEST GIANT TYPEWRITER.

It is strongly made, but simple in construction, so that any one can quickly learn to operate it, and write as rapidly as they would with pen and ink. The letters of the alphabet most frequently used being so grouped as to enable one to write rapidly; the numerals, 1 to 10, and the punctuation marks being together. With this machine you can send letters, address envelopes, make out bills, and do almost any kind of work not requiring a large, expensive machine. With each typewriter we send a tube of ink and full instructions for using the machine. Price complete, \$1.00, by express.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

THE BUGHOUSE PUZZLE.

It is the most mystifying puzzle ever invented, and consists of 14 pieces of metal, packed in a neat little box. With them you can form a checker board—that is, if you know how. The trick is to do it, and a tougher job you never tackled. Several other interesting combinations are possible. Get a box and see how many you can do. Price 12 cents each, by mail, postpaid.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.



to a friend, as it is about to be taken, it will instantly disappear.

Price, 10c. each by mail, postpaid.
C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.

POCKET WHISK-BROOM.

This is no toy, but a real whisk-broom, 6½ inches high. It is made of imported Japanese bristles, neatly put together, and can easily be carried in the vest pocket, ready for use at any moment, for hats or clothing, etc. Price 10 cents each, by mail, postpaid.

C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., N. Y.

LITTLE GIANT MICROSCOPE.

This powerful little instrument is made of oxidized metal. It stands on two supports made the exact length, to get a sharp, 1-inch focus on the object to be magnified. There is a high-powered lens of imported glass mounted in the circular eye-piece. It can be used to detect impurities in liquids, for examining cloths, or to magnify any object to enormous size. Can be carried in the vest pocket.

Price, 6c. each, postpaid.

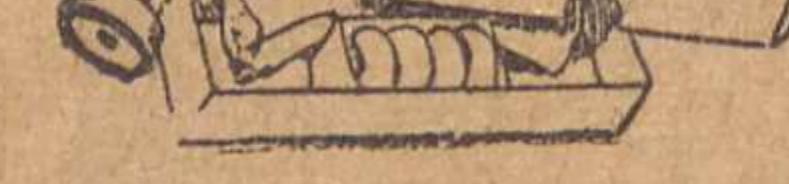
M. V. GALLIGAN, 419 W. 56th St., N. Y.



IMITATION FLIES.

Absolutely true to Nature! A dandy scarf-pin and a rattling good joke. It is impossible to do these pins justice with a description. You have to see them to understand how lifelike they are. When people see them on you they want to brush them off. They wonder "why that fly sticks to you" so persistently. This is the most realistic novelty ever put on the market. It is a distinct ornament for anybody's necktie, and a decided joke on those who try to chase it.

Price, 10c. by mail postpaid.
WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.



With one of these guns you can defy the Sullivan Law with impunity. It is used to scare, and not to shoot. It is impossible to detect the fact that it is not a genuine revolver. Can be used as a paper-weight, an ornament, or in other ways. Price, by mail, 45 cents each, postpaid.

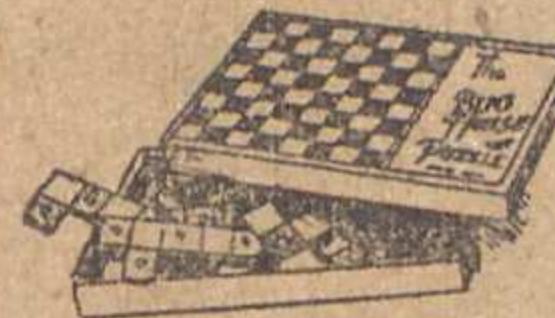
M. V. GALLIGAN, 419 W. 56th St., N. Y.

RUBBER TACKS.

They come six in a box. A wonderful imitation of the real tack. Made of rubber. The box in which they come is the ordinary tack box. This is a great parlor entertainer and you can play a lot of tricks with the tacks. Place them in the palm of your hand, point upward. Then slap the other hand over the tacks and it will seem as if you are committing suicide. Or you can show the tacks and then put them in your mouth and chew them, making believe you have swallowed them. Your friends will think you are a magician. Then, again, you can exhibit the tacks and then quickly push one in your cheek or somebody else's cheek and they will shriek with fear. Absolutely harmless and a very practical and funny joke.

Price by mail, 10c. a box of 6 tacks; 3 for 25c.
WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.



THE BUGHOUSE PUZZLE.

It is the most mystifying puzzle ever invented, and consists of 14 pieces of metal, packed in a neat little box. With them you can form a checker board—that is, if you know how. The trick is to do it, and a tougher job you never tackled. Several other interesting combinations are possible. Get a box and see how many you can do. Price 12 cents each, by mail, postpaid.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

NEW TEN-CENT FOUNTAIN PEN.



One of the most peculiar and mystifying pens on the market. It requires no ink. All you have to do is to dip it in water, and it will write for an indefinite period. The secret can only be learned by procuring one, and you can make it a source of both pleasure and amusement by claiming to your friends what it can do and then demonstrating the fact. Moreover, it is a good pen, fit for practical use, and will never leak ink into your pocket, as a defective fountain pen might do.

Price, 10c. each by mail.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

SLIDE THE PENCIL.

The pencil that keeps them guessing. Made of wood and lead just like an ordinary pencil, but when your victim starts to write with it—presto! the lead disappears. It is so constructed that the slightest pressure on the paper makes the lead slide into the wood. Very funny and a practical joke.

Price, 10c. each by mail, postpaid; 3 for 25c.
H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

BLACK-EYE JOKE.

New and amusing joker. The victim is told to hold the tube close to his eye so as to exclude all light from the back, and then to remove the tube until pictures appear in the center. In trying to locate the pictures he will receive the finest black-eye you ever saw. We furnish a small box of blackening preparation with each tube, so the joke can be used indefinitely. Those not in the trick will be caught every time. Absolutely harmless. Price by mail 15c. each; 2 for 25c.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

GOOD LUCK PUZZLE.

It consists of three horseshoes fastened together. Only a very clever person can take off the closed horseshoe from the two linked horseshoes. But it can be done in a moment when the secret is known. Price, by mail, 10c. each.
H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

TRICK CIGARETTE BOX.

This one is a corkscrew right away, if you want to have a barrel of joy. Here's the secret: It looks like an ordinary red box of Turkish cigarettes. But it contains a trigger, under which you place a paper cap. Offer your friend a smoke and he raises the lid of the box. That explodes the cap, and if you are wise you will get out of sight with the box before he gets over thinking he was shot. Price, 15c. postpaid.
WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

LIGHTNING TRICK BOX.

A startling and pleasing illusion! "The ways of the world are devious," says Matthew Arnold, but the ways of the Lightning Trick Box when properly handled are admitted to be puzzling and uncertain. You take off the lid and show your friends that it is full of nice candy. Replace the lid, when you can solemnly assure your friends that you can instantly empty the box in their presence without opening it; and taking off the lid again, sure enough the candy has disappeared. Or you can change the candy into a piece of money by following the directions sent with each box. This is the neatest and best cheap trick ever invented.

Price, only 10c.; 3 for 25c., mailed, postpaid.

M. V. GALLIGAN, 419 W. 56th St., N. Y.

WHISTLEPHONE.

This is one of the greatest musical instruments ever invented. It is made entirely of metal and is almost invisible when in use. With it, in a few moments, you can learn to play all kinds of tunes, have lots of fun, please and amuse your friends and make some money, too. Fine for either song or piano accompaniment or by itself alone. You place the whistlephone in the mouth with half circle out, place end of tongue to rounded part and blow gently as if to cool the lips. A few trials will enable one to play any tune or air.

Price 6 cents each by mail, post-paid.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY

LATEST ISSUES

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